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# THE CABINET COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

1622–1784

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# THE CABINET COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

IN THE

# SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

1622–1784

By
EDWARD RAYMOND TURNER, PH.D.
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Author of "The Privy Council of England
in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth
Centuries, 1603–1784"

VOLUME I

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TO
MY WIFE

ELEANOR BOWIE TURNER

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# PREFACE

THIS work concerns the main theme of the author's study of the English executive in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of which an antecedent part, on the privy council, was published three years ago. In the preface to the first portion of that writing the author described his research begun about 1910, in the history of cabinet government in England, the broadening of his study to include examination of the structure and working of the privy council and its committees, and the relations of king, principal ministers, parliament, and developing departments. With publication of the volumes now appearing the greater part of his task is complete; but he has mostly finished research for an account of the crown in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and for another relating to ministers and parliament during that time, partly written and designed for publication in the future.

The volumes already issued deal with the privy council in its greatness and power, the lessening of its vigor and importance, development of the committee system, subordinate and associated councils and boards, and gradual relegation of council work to the committee of the whole council. From those volumes was excluded consideration of the committee for foreign affairs, since therefrom came the cabinet council.

In the present work are set forth the beginnings of the foreign committee in the time of James I, with account of the succession of committees of limited membership in the seventeenth century under that name concerned not only with foreign affairs but with all other matters of moment;

how Charles II reforming the privy council renounced such a committee, yet constituted a similar one that bore a different name; how his committee of intelligence was shortly known again as the foreign committee, and was later designated "the committee" and its members "lords of the committee". In further chapters are collected early references to cabinet and junto in England, and detailed consideration is devoted to the evidence for identifying the cabinet in the seventeenth century with the various foreign committees of the time of Charles I and Charles II, with "the committee" of William and Mary, and with the "lords of the committee" under Anne. After 1679 no committee for foreign affairs was formally appointed, and about the beginning of the Hanoverian period the term cabinet superseded the others. Yet, while the cabinet ceased to be appointed as a standing committee of the privy council, and while it had become in effect a small council itself, it ceased not to be regarded formally and legally as the committee for foreign affairs.

In the second volume, to be published next year, will be described the structure, organization, and work of the cabinet after 1717, when the sovereign ceased to preside, its relations with the privy council and with various boards and officials, the lords justices and their tasks, the enlargement of the cabinet council, with the development of private meetings of ministers and smaller groups of principal members, the apparent existence of an inner and an outer cabinet in the later years of George II, and the reduction of the cabinet to small size again during the reign of George III.

In detailed work at length upon a complicated subject no design can avoid all objection; nor should cross reference and duplication be altogether wanting. The author's treatment was resolved during much preliminary study and considering what might seem best position of the parts. The result was originally embodied in a plan for four volumes on the decline of the privy council and the rise of the cabinet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When securing publication made it necessary to bring out the work in two parts, the arrangement already determined—privy council in its greatness and wane, personnel, procedure, and work; committees and associated boards; the committee of foreign affairs, in which form the cabinet first appeared; rise and development of the cabinet, its form, procedure, and work; lords justices or regencies of cabinet members; inner group of ministers; appearance of a small cabinet again—seemed to the author so far the best scheme that he kept it unchanged, dividing, as it did very naturally, into two parts of two volumes each.

Account of materials used is given in a bibliography in the second volume. The information has been drawn mostly from rare and miscellaneous sources in various libraries and archives, especially in the Public Record Office and the British Museum in London. Since often the exposition is constructed from great numbers of isolated and miscellaneous data, largely unpublished and difficult to assemble together, and since in some instances preponderance or scantiness of evidence bore on conclusions, the author has used what may seem too much detail and illustration; since some of the evidence was elusive and not easy to interpret, he has very often incorporated pertinent words from the original even though that was in archaic spelling or obsolete form; and he has further enlarged the number of details in the case of lists of members of cabinets or committees or more numerous lists of attendance at meetings, where the source contained merely the office held or else only the name of the holder, by adding the name of the person when wanting or the office where that was not given. In all this much care has been taken.

The author has endeavored to go no further than the evidence allowed. He has sought no striking deductions when the sources seemed not to allow them. He has tried to avoid facile explanations of obscure constitutional development merely from political events. Nor has he tried for complete simplicity by omitting contrary evidence when that evidence appeared, since such clarity, save in the opinion of the novice, is artificial, misleading, and unreal.

The author remembers with pleasure obligations now to be acknowledged. Cora, countess of Strafford permitted examination of the papers of Sir Robert Walpole, at Houghton Hall in 1911. The earl of Dartmouth allowed copying of cabinet minutes preserved among his papers at Patshull House. Mr. W. L. Clements gave access to the Shelburne MSS. in his collection at Ann Arbor. Sir Almeric FitzRoy, long clerk of the privy council, answered various questions with experience and knowledge. Mr. Thomas Jones, first assistant secretary of the cabinet, contributed interesting information about contemporary procedure and practice. Mr. S. C. Ratcliff, of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, assisted in obtaining information not in the reports. On several occasions the author had the privilege of conversations with Sir Charles Firth at Oxford. He is greatly indebted to Mr. R. L. Poole, long editor of *The English Historical Review*, and to his successor, Mr. G. N. Clark, for printing earlier writings of the author on the subject, and to Dr. J. F. Jameson, formerly editor of *The American Historical Review*, for printing others. At the Biblioteca Nazionale di San Marco, at the Bodleian Library, at the Peabody Library, above all at the British Museum, he had assistance and cordial attention. At the Public Record Office he must particularly mention Mr. Hilary Jenkinson and Mr. C. S. B. Buckland. Finally, he is under great obligations to President—now President Emeritus—F. J. Goodnow and to Dr. W. W. Willoughby of the Johns Hopkins University for encouragement and assistance in achieving publication, and likewise to Mr. C. W. Dittus, manager of the Johns Hopkins Press.

EDWARD RAYMOND TURNER.

Baltimore,
December 1929

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

IN EARLIER times government of civilized or semicivilized people in large areas was generally of one of two principal types. Power was centralized in a despotic ruler who controlled subject districts through subordinate officials; or central authority outside some part controlled by the higher ruler was weak and scarcely existed, while amidst "feudal" decentralization authority was actually held by local rulers more or less in subordination, perhaps, to a suzerain above them.

In antiquity among the more highly civilized peoples of southern Europe and western Asia excellent governmental systems were developed in small areas by various city states. Large agglomerations of peoples and territories were by force brought together and held in the "empires" of the Nile Valley and countries east of the Mediterranean Sea. In one instance exceptional success was achieved. Latin tribes effecting a strong confederation and developing a successful city state in Italy, presently spread their authority and their municipal institutions over wide conquests, and then for the vast jurisdiction thus acquired they developed a system of governmental administration and law so superior to anything before, that the Roman Empire with strong central power that functioned easily and well throughout its extent appeared as the most powerful and striking of ancient states, remained an exemplar in medieval times, and excites admiration at present.

During the middle ages most of the people of Europe lived under governments that actually controlled small districts or else under feudal vassals. In a diminishing area centered about Constantinople the waning Byzantine Empire maintained an autocracy descended from the Roman system. In the west, save for brief intervals, nothing more than a shadow of the Roman Empire reappeared. In course of time, however, strong and effective central governments began to be developed by western sovereigns who controlled large and important domains. After centuries of feudal weakness and disorganization among the peoples in what had been Gaul, kings of France succeeded in welding together feudal lands about the Isle of France into a strong monarchy for the French nation. With nearly the same measure of success such a task was accomplished by union of various small kingdoms to make the Kingdom of Spain. But probably during this time the greatest success was achieved in England. For centuries there during the Anglo-Saxon period weakness and inability to construct an effective central government had persisted, even though excellent local institutions were developed. After the conquest of England by Northmen-French invaders in the eleventh century, however, a line of Norman and Plantagenet kings soon built up the strongest and most effective central government in western Europe.

Generally speaking the development of strong central government, in England, in France, or in Castile was accomplished by the monarch absorbing from feudal vassals and local corporations authority and rights to increase his own, until his justice superseded other justice or was superior to it in all the parts of his realm, until he made laws or took the greater part in making laws that were obeyed by all of his subjects, until the local areas were articulated effectively with the central government through officials actually subordinate to that government and working easily with it, and until the central government collected from the different parts of the monarch's jurisdiction enough revenue for his organization. As these various ends were more or less completely worked out in the states where such governments appeared, all functions of the state's government tended to be centered in the sovereign, until finally many people believed that his authority was unlimited in his realm, that he ruled by divine right, and that he was responsible only to God.

It was possible for a sovereign to extend his authority effectively over any wide area only through an adequate governmental organization, since it was beyond the power of any man, however vigorous and able, to attend even to the important affairs in the central government of a great state. Hence, whether among the Ottoman Turks or in the maritime empire of Venice, in Castile or in Aragon, in France where the king's power became almost absolute as the states general withered away, or in England where king continued to be limited by parliament representing the upper classes among his subjects, in each of these states the ruler was assisted by a council or group of ministers and advisers, who singly performed various tasks assigned to them, and also as a body did most of the important work of the central government under the ruler, for him or with him.

All through the middle ages there was a council of the king in England.[1] After the Norman Conquest the king governed his realm with the assistance of a *consilium* or *concilium* which on some occasions was a large body of his principal vassals and others, while at other times and for the most part it was a much smaller body composed in effect of his favorite and most trusted tenants and his household officials. From the larger group, in which the smaller one was included, there developed in course of time and with important additions the parliament of England. From the smaller and more continuous group, from which through specialization of function gradually separated the exchequer and the central courts of common law, developed the medieval council, called sometimes the privy council.

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[1] The principal treatise on this subject is J. F. Baldwin, *The King's Council in England during the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1911).

Concerning this council of the kings of England a great deal is known, though scantiness of records at times leaves much more uncertain. For a long time the council included officers and justices whose work was gradually developed in organs that became completely separate from the council, while the process of separation of exchequer and courts from the council was long incomplete, function continuing to be partly unspecialized, members acting first in one capacity then in another. And, indeed, as separation became more complete, and when exchequer and courts no longer merged back into the *curia regis* from which they had come, the king's council continued to retain the multiplicity of functions it had had in an earlier age, acting as a court for administering the king's justice, a body of counsellors to give the sovereign advice, an assembly to assist him in legislation, and a group of officials assisting him to carry on the executive work. At the end of the middle ages the king's council or privy council was the principal organ through which he governed his realm, while his councillors sitting especially in Star Chamber administered justice and dealt with offenders.[2]

There is extant a mass of records of the medieval council in England.[3] Unfortunately, however, for what reason one does not now know, these records end apparently in the time of Henry VI, and there is then a great gap for the years 1454 to 1540, at which time again records begin. Accordingly, for the century of transition from the king's council of medieval times to the council or privy council of the Tudor period there is such paucity of information as to make very difficult the task of dealing with the subject.[4]

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[2] For an extended treatment of the matters contained in this chapter see E. R. Turner, *The Privy Council of England in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, etc., 2 vols. (Baltimore, 1927-8).

[3] The principal records were printed by Sir Harris Nicolas, *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (1834-7), of which vols. i-vi concern the period 1386-1454.

In 1404 the "great and continual council" was composed of twenty-two members. About 1476 Sir John Fortescue thought that the king's council should contain thirty-two members. During the reign of Henry VII, when information is exceedingly meager, a number of records copied from a lost council book of entries, Liber Intrationum, show that councils were attended by twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-six, thirty-three, thirty-four, thirty-nine. In 1503 the king gave judgment in a council attended by forty-one. For some time in the reign of Henry VIII information is likewise wanting. About 1527 there were at least forty-six sworn councillors.

It is extremely doubtful whether there was under the early Tudors any well recognized continuous council containing so many members. Probably not a few of those given as present when judgments were rendered in the council in Star Chamber or mentioned as " counsel " elsewhere were judges, king's counsel acting in respect of particular cases or in connection with particular work or others who would later on have been termed " commissioners " rather than members of the " council ". Probably the term " council " was used to denote the more or less continuous body of the king's advisers and assistants, and it may be that on some occasions at least the term " privy council " referred rather to the smaller group of the more trusted, more skilled, and more important councillors who assisted the king. In 1526 Ordinances for the Household given out at Eltham declared that twenty of the most trusted and important councillors should accompany the king, or of them ten particularly, and especially four, of whom two at least should meet twice daily in the council chamber, wherever the court happened to be. Ten years later Henry VIII enumerated thirteen who were of his " Pryvey Counsell ": it is not certain that he was giving them all. About this time references appear to the appointment of a clerk of the privy council. Whether the first clerks kept council records now lost is not known. In 1540, however, with the appointment of a new clerk, following the fall and execution of Thomas Cromwell, a record begins again. From 10 August 1540, save for a few gaps, the most serious of them for the years 1602-13, there is a register of the privy council to the present time, and intensive study of the council can thenceforth be made.

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[4] No satisfactory account of the Tudor council has so far been published and no exhaustive study of the subject has been undertaken. The work of Baldwin ends substantially with the middle ages. The intensive research for the author's own work begins with the Stuart period. The accounts hitherto written for the Tudor period, save for the studies of Leadam and Scofield in connection with Star Chamber, are either brief or based mostly upon printed materials. E. P. Cheyney's *A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth*, 2 vols. (London, 1914, 1926) contains interesting and useful chapters, which remain, however, completely aloof from the antecedent difficult problems of this subject. Some useful work on parts of the problem is contained in the articles of A. F. Pollard, "Council, Star Chamber and Privy Council under the Tudors": *English Historical Review*, xxxvii. 337-60, 516-39, xxxviii. 42-60 (July, October 1922, January 1923), though incompleteness of research assists his ready deductions.

In 1540 the names of nineteen members are listed at the beginning of the record, though it is not certain that this record contains the names of all the privy councillors then, since the councillors were often divided in two groups—one with the king and another at Westminster. In 1542 there were at least twenty-two members. Thereafter the number increased for a time, then declined, then increased again. In 1551 there were thirty-three members of “the Counsaill”. In 1552 there were thirty-one, besides nine associated commissioners. In 1554 a Venetian reported that the council then contained forty. During the long reign of Elizabeth, when the council reached the height of its power, it was smaller, as it seems to have been under Henry VIII. In 1559 it contained twenty members. In 1598 eleven. In 1601 thirteen.

During the Stuart period the membership of the privy council steadily increased. In 1605 it contained perhaps twenty members. In 1623 thirty-five. In 1631 forty. By 1640 it had declined to thirty-five or less. During the struggle between Charles I and parliament and in the years of vicissitude that followed, the privy council of the king disappeared in England, to be succeeded by various committees of members of parliament and then by successive councils of state and protector's councils.

In 1660 the privy council was restored with the king. That year it contained about twenty-eight. In 1664 forty. In 1675 fifty. In 1679, when it contained forty-seven it was reformed and reduced to thirty-three, at about which number it was designed to be kept in the future. After the death of Charles II, however, the reform was no longer maintained. In 1688 the privy council of James II contained forty-five. In 1700 the council had fifty-one. In 1712 eighty-two. At the beginning of the Hanoverian period the council was smaller again, but again it was speedily enlarged. In 1714 it had fifty-two members. In 1720 seventy. That number was generally not exceeded under George I and George II, the council membership ranging between sixty and seventy during their time. Under George III, however, it was rapidly enlarged. In 1760 it had seventy-five members. In 1782 one hundred and six. In 1801 one hundred and thirty-one. At the present time it contains more than three hundred members, most of whom never meet and few of whom ever perform any council work whatsoever.

The history of the privy council since the sixteenth century has to do with waning activity and declining power along with enlargement of the number of those who composed it. In the time of Elizabeth, and to a lesser extent in the time of James I, the privy council with a membership of eleven to forty at various times, was the principal advisory and executive body in the kingdom, and under the king was ordinarily the most important governmental organ in the realm. In 1613 that acute and cultivated observer, the Spanish ambassador, Gondomar, wrote to his master that in England there was only one council, wherein all important matters were managed. At that time there were, it is true, in England certain subordinate councils for particular regions—such as the council of the north and the council of Wales, and at times a little later there were associated subordinate councils—such as the various councils of war in the period 1621-40, but the first of these had merely local and particular jurisdiction while the others were used for a short time only. In Spain about the end of the sixteenth century there were a dozen councils, each one dealing directly with the king and having in its charge the particular work that had been given it to manage. In England, on the contrary, there was the one potent privy council which under the king and with the king or for him attended to all the different important kinds of work that concerned the governing of England.

The privy council of England in the time of Elizabeth and James I was a more important body than parliament, for not only had parliament not yet achieved the great power and activity to be attained later on, but parliament was in session merely a part of the time, with long intervals often enough, while all the manifold tasks that had constantly to be performed in ruling a kingdom were done regularly by the privy council itself or following its recommendation by the king.

Primarily, as originally, the council was a *consilium* and a *curia*—a body of the most trusted and helpful of the king's servants to give him counsel and assist with their judgment. Again and again the great, the doubtful, and the difficult matters were considered by the king in his council. Connected with these functions was the doing of the multifarious tasks that concern the central government of a realm—executive, legislative, judicial, in all of which the council took a great part. The councillors assisted in preparing proclamations and orders about a vast variety of things to be done or obeyed. They helped in the conduct of foreign affairs. They took active and unceasing part in directing admiralty and naval matters, and whatever had to do with army, ordnance, and defence. They were active in formulating financial policy, devising schemes to increase revenue, in collecting the revenue, in appropriating supply, and making payments. They dealt with a vast number of things that concerned local government, either directly or through various local officials. From lords lieutenant, justices of the peace, mayors, burgesses, and others, they received unending stream of petitions or communications, and sent back orders, directions, or suggestions. They took large and increasing part in the management of whatever concerned commerce and trade. They constantly assisted the king in administering his outlying possessions—such as Ireland and the Channel Islands, and they were later to attend much to the plantations and dominions in America, in Africa, and in Asia that Englishmen acquired for the crown.

In legislative matters the council took a part that was sometimes more important than that taken by parliament itself. With the advice and assistance of the privy council the king issued many orders, proclamations, regulations, and ordinances—that were in effect laws only a little less important than some of those passed by parliament and the king. Furthermore, the summoning, proroguing, or dissolving of parliament was done by the king with advice of his council; and the privy councillors were members of one house of parliament or the other, where they took active part in making laws or granting taxes to the crown, generally guiding the course of parliamentary work in accordance with decisions already made in privy council.[5] Finally, bills passed by the two houses did not become law until they had the assent of the crown: until 1707 the sovereign, when he thought it well, did not hesitate to exercise the veto, which in theory the crown still possesses, and the royal assent was usually not given until the bills sent up had been scrutinized in council and had favorable report from the council.

The process of the development of the royal power and the strength of the central government had been constantly connected with extension of the king's justice and supremacy of the king's courts. From the start the crown had been the fountain of justice and the great court of appeal in so far as feudal and local courts did not stand in the way. In the twelfth century the principal tasks of the king's councillors had been assisting him in dispensing justice, receiving his revenue, and giving judgments in connection with it. In course of time groups of councillors or justices dealt particularly with certain kinds of cases, thus giving rise to the great central courts of the king, while the king's justice was carried all over his realm by itinerant judges, thus creating the common law, which was the king's law that superseded other kinds. During the development of the court of king's bench, the court of common pleas, the exchequer, and other bodies, various parts of the judicial work once done by the king's councillors were more and more completely separated from conciliar work, but always such judicial work of the king and his council as had not been specifically delegated to particular courts remained with the king and councillors, and actually throughout the middle ages the most striking activity of the council was judicial work, done especially in the Star Chamber.

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[5] For the decline of the influence of privy councillors in parliament, beginning about 1621, see Wallace Notestein, *The Winning of the Initiative by the House of Commons* (London, [1924 ?]). The author ascribes this alteration in part to the development of the committee of the whole house, which he thinks appeared "rather accidentally" about 1607 (p. 37).

During the sixteenth century, as so often before in English constitutional development—notably in the case of *curia* and exchequer in the twelfth century, the councillors developed a differentiation of function, so that more and more they did judicial work, when reinforced by king's justices and assisted often by others, they sat as the council in Star Chamber, or, as it gradually came to be called, the court of Star Chamber, while the same councillors doing advisory or administrative work met as the privy council. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the great part of the judicial work performed by privy councillors was done when they sat as the court of Star Chamber, so that when in consequence of the bitter opposition that arose between the courts of common law and the king's prerogative courts parliament abolished the court of Star Chamber along with some others in 1641, the greater part of the councillors' judicial work came then to an end.

Neither before nor afterwards, however, did the judicial work of the privy council cease. At no time had all of the king's judicial prerogative been delegated to particular courts, or had it become the custom for all the remainder to be exercised by his councillors in Star Chamber. Under Elizabeth, as under Charles I and Charles II and to a diminishing extent later on, the privy council dealt with many "causes" or cases involving justice, rights, and even property, in the course of which it summoned persons to attend it and give testimony, it rendered judgment, and even committed to prison. This work was frowned upon by the Long Parliament, which strove to limit the judicial work of the privy council in England, and after the restoration such work steadily declined.

Meanwhile, however, another part of its judicial work grew apace. The king and his council were the highest court of appeal from outlying dominions, and there was no disposition on the part of parliament to abridge such court work as concerned Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and also thereafter a vast colonial empire was built up as outlying possessions all over the world were added to the few dominions that English kings had held close to England. As the British Empire developed the judicial authority of the privy council enlarged, since it was the high court of appeal for the king's possessions outside of Great Britain.

So, at the beginning of the seventeenth century the privy council of England was one of the most important and august governing bodies in Christendom and one of the most highly respected. Its functions made it far more important than the council of Castile, and other circumstances rendered it greater than the Ottoman *divan*, the *consiglio di dieci* of Venice, or even than the French *conseil privé et d'état*. In the lives of most Englishmen it was more important than their parliament. Under it England was ruled for the king effectively and well.

Actually, however, the privy council began to decline in activity and power even before parliament attacked the king and his advisers, and after the restoration when a privy council of the king was again established the decline continued unabated. In part this decline went along with increase in parliament's power, for after 1660 and especially after 1688 the privy council no longer took large part in finance and taxation, and gradually parliament directed the expenditure of money as well as the granting of supply. In part the decline resulted from gradual development of various boards and departments, so that in the time of Anne the privy council no longer dealt with the great mass of admiralty, treasury, and plantation matters that had formerly concerned it directly. But most of all the decline resulted from gradual giving over of the most important matters that had once engrossed the council to a part or a committee of itself, so that out of the privy council developed in effect a smaller and more powerful council.

The system of giving to parts of the council preliminary consideration of certain tasks began at least as far back as the sixteenth century. Under Edward VI, at a time when the privy council contained thirty-one members, several groups were appointed to deal with particular kinds of business, the several council members being assisted by others who were not of the council, the groups forming thus what would later have been designated as " commissions ", as indeed they were actually called at the time. In the first year of Elizabeth five groups of councillors were constituted, one of them for consideration of all things relating to parliament. Under James I and Charles I a great deal of the preliminary and of the lesser council business was given over to committees of the council, a name which in connection with parts of the privy council came into use in the early part of the seventeenth century. Thereafter with further development of the committee system the greater part of the work that remained to the council was delegated to committees for consideration, recommendation, and report, until finally the actual work of the privy council was mostly reference of matters to committees of itself and afterwards formal sanctioning of what they had arranged.

Under the earlier Stuarts and for some time after the restoration committees of the council were of limited membership, either temporary for management of a particular task or standing for the management of all work in one category until the committee was dissolved. In 1604 four members of the council were appointed by James I to treat with the Spanish ambassador. In 1622 six were appointed a committee to consider matters affecting leases of Tower Wharf. Four years later a committee of twelve was appointed to deal with a dispute about fisheries in the North Sea. During the years 1660-1667 there were some seventy-two committees of the council, most of them temporary bodies, among others a committee for his majesty's coronation, a committee for the affairs of the prince of Orange, a committee for postmasters, one for Bombay, a committee to deal with the pestilence, one for erecting a bridge at Putney. In 1689 eleven councillors were appointed a committee for the coronation, and seven a committee to prepare rules concerning the Tower and keeping prisoners there. Two years later ten of the council were appointed a committee on securing the streets of London against robbers.

After the later years of the seventeenth century limited temporary committees were appointed less and less frequently, and when they seemed to be appointed they were apt to be merely aspects of the committee of the whole privy council that had been developing in the meantime. The principal exceptions were that well on into the eighteenth century limited particular committees were appointed for interment of deceased sovereigns and coronation of sovereigns acceding, while more frequently such committees were named to examine bills sent over from Ireland for examination before being allowed to go into effect; but as the eighteenth century progressed even these temporary, limited committees showed tendency to merge into the committee of the whole privy council.

Meanwhile more important work of particular kinds, that involved continuous application or recurrent fulfilment of the same tasks, had been given to standing committees. About 1616 there seem to have been a number of such groups, among others for Ireland—nine members, for the household—six, for the navy—seven. In 1623 there was a committee for the church—four members, a committee for revenue, trade, plantations, and courts—eighteen, a committee for patents, monoplies, fees and fines—eleven, and a committee for the army—thirteen: at this time the council contained about thirty-five members. In 1634, when the council contained thirty-six, there was a committee for foreign plantations—twelve members, a committee for trade—ten, a committee for the ordnance—seven, a committee for Ireland—six, and a committee for foreign affairs—containing at least six members. Immediately after the restoration were appointed a committeee for Irish affairs—twelve members, a committee for foreign plantations—ten, and a little later a committee for the navy—ten. In 1668, when the council contained forty-two members, Charles II established several important standing committees: the committee of foreign affairs—nine members, the committee for the admiralty, the navy, and military matters—fifteen, a committee for trade and plantations—fifteen, and a committee for petitions about complaint and grievance—seventeen. In 1679, when the privy council was reformed and reconstituted so as to contain thirty-three members, new standing committees were named: a committee for intelligence—nine members, a committee for Ireland—ten, a committee for Tangier—thirteen, and a committee for trade and plantations—twenty-two. In 1689 William appointed a standing committee of nine members for Irish affairs, and in 1694 another containing twelve members. But by the end of the seventeenth century the appointing of standing council committees of limited membership had almost come to an end, and when such committees seemed to be appointed, as often appeared to be the case, as a rule they were actually no more than phases of the committee of the whole privy council, that is to say, to all of the councillors was committed particular business for consideration and recommendation.

The development of the committee of the whole privy council, which went on during the latter part of the seventeenth century and which during the eighteenth superseded almost all other committee development, was a peculiar one, and while the process can be made entirely clear it is probable that the theory underlying it was never formulated by contemporaries and cannot now be certainly known.[6]

Often probably it was not easy to get committee work done, onerous and engrossing as it was, except by certain able and dependable members, who in consequence were apt to be put on many committees. In 1634 when there were probably five standing committees of the council, Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, was on four of them, and next year he was made a treasury commissioner as well. The two secretaries of state were on all five committees. Two years later the lord treasurer was on all six of the standing committees of which record is extant, the two secretaries and two other councillors were on five committees, and the archbishop of Canterbury on four. During the years 1660 to 1664 some fifty-four committees of the council, temporary and standing, were appointed. Of forty-three of these committees both secretaries of state were members, while one or other of the secretaries was on seven more. Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, later Lord Ashley—chancellor of the exchequer—was a member of forty-one of them, the earl of Anglesy—vice-treasurer of Ireland—of thirty-six, the lord treasurer of thirty-one, and the lord chancellor of seventeen. To some extent, then, the various committees were manned by the same members. From this it was a natural step to appoint particular councillors to be members of all committees, as was done by Charles II in 1668 in respect of the duke of York and the two secretaries of state.

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[6] Mr. Godfrey Davies has expressed the opinion that it was "perhaps borrowed from the procedure of the house of commons": *The Journal of Modern History,* i. 469 (September, 1929). Whatever may be thought of this as a possible conjecture, he gives no evidence to confirm it, and the author knows of no specific evidence whatever on which it might be surely founded.

On occasion at an earlier time substantially the same result had been achieved in another way. Whereas in the first half of the seventeenth century committees were constituted of particular members named when the committees were appointed, sometimes all the members of the council were appointed a committee for some particular task, perhaps on the assumption that in any event the members most needed would attend besides whom some others would come. In 1619 " the councell " was constituted a committee in respect of the quarrel of Lord Hollis with Sir Edward Coke. In 1636 a committee of twelve of the principal members of the council was appointed to prepare regulations for aliens allowed to remain in England, at which committee " any other of the Members of this Board " might be present. When the committee of trade and the committee of grievances were established in

1668, while they were appointed avowedly as limited standing committees, yet it was added that any of the other members of the council might come and take part in their decisions. In 1679 " all the Lords of the Councill " were appointed to be a committee to investigate the plot. In 1688 James II appointed all the members of the privy council a committee for trade and plantations. In 1702 Anne referred a representation from the commissioners of trade and plantations to " the Lords of a Committee of the whole Councill ". In 1714 there was a meeting of " the Lords of Her Majesty's Most Hon$^{ble}$ Privy Council in a Committee of the whole Council." By the beginning of the eighteenth century committees composed of all the lords of the council or committees of the whole council, exceptions earlier, had come to be the normal form of committee organization. As the eighteenth century went on it was exceptional for a committee of limited membership to be named; and when such a committee was established it was apt to be attended by any of the council members whether named for the committee or not.

During all this later time the old activity of the privy council constantly diminished. Actual participation in so many kinds of important and necessary work, financial, admiralty, ordnance, domestic, foreign, and what pertained to trade and plantations, was more and more given over to committees for preliminary dealing. What came to the privy council in the time of Elizabeth and James I was apt to be dealt with by councillors there. During the seventeenth century it was increasingly the custom for such work brought before the privy council to be referred to a committee of the council. In the committee was accomplished the pertinent investigation and there all the preliminary work in the matter was done. Thereupon the committee reported to the council, where its recommendation might be further considered, but was usually adopted, and order issued accordingly thereupon. Thus, more and more was the work of the council but reference of business brought to it down to a committee and afterwards formal sanctioning of what the committee recommended. In the committee itself the business was more actually and directly dealt with. As the committee of the whole council superseded other forms of council committee, such ordinary work as remained to the council was dealt with in the committee of the whole council. Save for formal sanction and official ordering, then, the privy council had by the middle of the eighteeenth century been superseded in respect of such work as seemed to remain to it by the committee of the whole council.

As the privy council enlarging became too numerous for secret tasks and despatch, it was superseded in respect of all its most important work in England by a smaller group, the cabinet council, which evolved from itself. The cabinet was no distillation out of the committee of the whole privy council. Supersession of committees of limited membership by the committee of all the members of the council had not been absolute. From the time of Charles I, at least, there was a committee of foreign affairs, so powerful and important as to attract the obloquy or admiration of people who lived then. It was a body that dealt not only with diplomacy and foreign relations, but with all other matters of the government of the country as well. Limited in membership and maintained as a small group of the most trusted and efficient ministers of the king, it developed formally as a committee, but actually more and more as a smaller, secret, effective council which took away from the privy council itself many of that body's principal tasks. Increasingly it was known as the cabinet council, a term first applied in suspicion and reproach. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it had almost all but the formal authority of the privy council a century before, and with the decline of royal prerogative later on it gained greater power than the privy council had ever possessed. During the Hanoverian period it engrossed nearly all the importance and control that the privy council once had possessed, leaving to that council official sanction and form and routine, and to the committee of the whole privy council Irish bills and appeals from the plantations, with other details for which the cabinet had no time and which developing departments had not taken.

It is the purpose of succeeding chapters to demonstrate particularly and at length that in origin what was called the cabinet was the committee of foreign affairs; that even during the first half of the seventeenth century it dealt not only with diplomacy and foreign relations but with important matters of all sorts; that its greatness and importance increased after 1660; that it afforded one of the ostensible reasons for discontent of parliament with the government of Charles II, so that reforming his council he promised to have no such committee; that during these years also it was the foreign committee which men had designated as cabinet or sometimes as cabal; that on reconstitution of the council in 1679 Charles at once appointed a committee of intelligence—actually the foreign committee with another name and well understood to mean about the same thing—less powerful and striking for the moment only because at first it contained some of the political opponents of the king and so had less of his trust and affection; that even during such time the committee of intelligence constituted virtually a small interior council for preliminary management of important affairs; that soon it came to be a body of the king's trusted councillors and men knew it again as the committee of foreign affairs, the appellation of cabinet also being constantly applied; that after 1679 there was no more formal appointing of a committee of foreign affairs, but this small body, in which vacancies were filled or to which additions were made at the king's pleasure, continued to exist as a group of privy councillors who regarded themselves as a committee of the council; that this one select committee of the council, at first repeatedly called the foreign committee, then usually referred to as "the committee", held its own, despite the gradual disappearance of all other limited committees of the council in favor of the committee of the whole council; that "the committee" or cabinet—still occasionally known as the committee of foreign affairs—was never a committee of the whole council except on rare occasions when its members chose to regard themselves, as privy councillors might in any session; that in the eighteenth century the cabinet enlarging underwent vicissitudes that recall phases of the history of the privy council during an earlier time. All this must be composed from an endless number of details often seeming trivial and barren, that constitute a labyrinthine maze whence only patience wins egress.

# CHAPTER II

## COMMITTEES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNTIL 1660

In the seventeenth century the cabinet developed from the privy council. In the eighteenth it took from the privy council almost all importance and power. That the cabinet had originated from the larger body was clear. But in after times students striving to discover how the cabinet had begun and learn the process by which it had grown from the privy council found the problem confused and perplexing.

He who studies in detail structure and working of the privy council during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and especially the committee system of that council may see two ways in which a smaller body like the cabinet could have been constructed from the council. As one of the limited committees of the council or as the committee of the whole council, either way it might have been developed.

The committee of the whole council, composed of all the members of the council and to be attended at will by any of them, but actually for the most part attended only by the most active, industrious, and dependable members, could well become, it might seem, the quintessence of the council's virtue and power, and in course of time by exclusion a small powerful council that would in respect of most matters supplant the body from which it had sprung.

On close inspection, however, the student is aware that generally speaking the committee of the whole privy council was not the cabinet. Usually the committee of the whole council dealt with minor matters or else almost altogether with business concerning Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, trade, and plantations, almost never with larger matters and with affairs of policy and state which the cabinet managed. The cabinet was small and its membership limited. The committee of the whole council was in theory a committee of all the members of the council, and during any considerable period was attended, off and on, by a considerable number of the members.

On the other hand there might seem to be much against the supposition that the cabinet was originally a limited committee of the council, since tendency increased for limited committees to disappear and for all committees to become aspects of the one committee of the whole privy council. Yet, during the seventeenth century there were many temporary committees of the council with limited membership, and, more important, not a few powerful standing committees of the same kind in which a great part of council work was accomplished.

That some of these committees might well in course of time have become small councils devoted entirely to the carrying on of particular work is shown in the development of government in Spain. In the time of Philip II there were twelve councils there: the council of Castile, the most important, its functions mainly judicial; the *camera* or chamber, originally a committee of the council of Castile; the council of Aragon; the council of Italy; the council of Flanders; the council of Portugal—after the conquest of that country by the Spaniards—the council of the Indies; the council of state, dealing with foreign affairs; the council of war; the council of the inquisition; the *hazienda* or council of action, which dealt with finance; and the council of the orders.[1] These councils existed in the place of a large council attending to various kinds of work, such as there was in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century. They were all of them directly subordinate to the king. Generally he did not attend their meetings, but worked largely in his own chamber, sending his secretary as he desired.[2]

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[1] A list of eleven such councils, omitting the council of Flanders and the council of Portugal, but including a council of justice is given in Sommario dell' ordine che se tiene alla corte di Spagna circa il governo delli stati del re catolico, MS. cited in Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa*, etc. (Berlin, 1837), i. 152.

There had been little tendency towards such development in England, however. In 1613 the Spanish ambassador was reported as sending back to his government an account of the English court: "In this Kingdome, there is only one Councell, in w$^{ch}$ all businesses are treated."[3] For the most part so it remained. Generally the various standing committees of the council had remained subordinate to the council, and usually they had disappeared within the council again in a short time. About the beginning of the eighteenth century Roger North, declaring that the cabinet had emerged out of the privy council contrasted English development with that in Spain. He said: "The Spaniards have peculiar councils, called juntos, assigned to each great branch of the royal power, which prevents such sub-emergent councils as these."[4]

Yet it was in a standing select committee of the privy council that the cabinet had arisen in the mean time. During the seventeenth century the most important committee of the council was the committee for foreign affairs. Influential and effective from the start with respect to governmental business of all sorts, in course of time this committee became in effect an informal council, and gradually during the eighteenth century it superseded to a great extent not only the privy council but also the king in actual rule of the realm.

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[2] Ranke, i. 152, 155. There is a list of nine: the council of state, of Castile, of Aragon, of Portugal, of Italy, of the military orders, of the Indies, of the treasury, of the exchequer—in *A True Relation . . . of the . . . Entertainment, giuen to . . . Prince Charles . . . at Madrid* (1623): Public Record Office, London, State Papers, Domestic, James I, cxliii. 96.

[3] Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, Spain, xx, 22 September 1613.

[4] *The Lives of the Norths* (London, 1890), i. 299.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century in England foreign affairs were altogether within the king's jurisdiction and were very largely dealt with by himself. Diplomacy and foreign relations were managed mostly by James I with the assistance of his secretaries—as under Elizabeth, and with the cooperation of some of his favorites and most trusted advisers. Generally the privy council was not asked to assist the king in conducting foreign affairs. At times, however, the assistance of privy councillors was sought with respect to some foreign matter. At first when that was done the business was apt to be given over not to a committee of the council but to the council itself.

In 1607, in connection with a complaint made to the house of commons by merchants trading to Spain, James declared that parliament was not accustomed to deal with intercourse between the crown and princes abroad, or with war and peace, nor was parliament fitted to do this, "but these things were alwaies leaft to the Jugement and managing of the King and his Privy Counsell, being matters wch are carried by secreate constitutions and motyfs of state, wch are not fytt to be divulged to multitudes."[5] In 1617, on order from the king, his majesty's ambassador to the archduke in Flanders presented himself before the privy council to give long and particular account of his negotiation, what he had demanded and the replies from ministers to whom he had been referred. "All w^ch", said a communication to the king signed by ten of the council, "in respect of the importance of the Businesse wee haue thought it our duty to send vnto yo^r

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[5] S. P. D., James I, xxvii, 13 May 1607.

Matie by this bearer."[6] That the council was taking real part on this occasion is seen by the councillors' further communication the same day. The vice-chamberlain had delivered to the council a letter from Sir Thomas Lake, secretary of state, declaring it the king's pleasure that the vice-chamberlain should go to the Spanish ambassador, inform him of the archduke's proceedings, and declare that the king of England had resolved to break all amity and commerce with him. The council had presumed to advise the vice-chamberlain to forbear for a while, until the king had seen the last protestation made by his ambassador before the archduke and what ensued, with which the council believed the king not yet acquainted; the council believing this more important than the other negotiations, and that it would cause the king to alter his intention. They hoped for his majesty's approval.[7]

In 1620 James having given a certain Captain North a commission under his seal to conquer and colonize territories on the Amazon River, the principal families of the kingdom being interested in the enterprise, Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, begged for an audience at the privy council to discuss the affair. This was granted.[8] Gondomar told the councillors he was informed that Captain North, of whom he spoke very honorably, intended a voyage to the Amazon for conquest. Inasmuch as his master held just title to that country, he required in his master's name that the expedition be stayed. "Whereunto their Lopps (after they had acknowledged that he had propounded the matter wth great discretion and moderation) made him againe this answere, That the Board conceiued it to be a matter of great importance & consequence, not yet readie for a mature answere, That his

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[6] Public Record Office, Privy Council Register, xxix, 23 June 1617.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Gondomar to Philip III, London, 30 May 1620 (N. S.): Public Record Office, Spanish Transcripts, xxi.

Lo̅p̅p̅ would in the meane tyme take notice, that it was not a trafficke new begunne & erected, but vpheld & contynued by this voyage, And lastlie, that his Lopp would be pleased to exhibite his proposition in writing, w$^{th}$ the reasons that he was instructed in, of the King his Masters clayme, To w$^{ch}$ he replyed that although he could not amplie doe it, Yet he would endeavo$^{r}$ to giue their Lo̅p̅p̅s̅ satisfaction in the best manner he was able." [9] While the matter was being considered the captain departed in his ship with some two hundred men. James was furious. He said he would put the matter in Gondomar's hands, he to dispose penalty and remedy therefor. The king also declared he would cut off North's head, as he had Sir Walter Raleigh's. Gondomar wrote back that he thought no harm would be done to the interests of his master.[10] Four years later his majesty signifying his pleasure that a conference should be held with the Persian ambassador and a treaty made, a council of ten at Whitehall appointed five councillors to treat with ambassador to that purpose.[11]

In 1625 Charles I having advised with his council about a memorial to the extraordinary ambassador of France, in which was demanded restitution of various ships, the council declared that the king had acted justly with respect to interests of the king of France.[12] Next year a council of seventeen at Whitehall considering written and oral propositions of the ambassador of the United Provinces—as to a treaty made recently with Spain, naval help which the Dutch offered, payment of six thousand English soldiers in Dutch service, and other matters—gave answer.[13] In 1627 a treaty with Sallee being taken up at the board by command of the king, further consideration was ordered and a report to a committee of the council.[14] In 1629 divers lords of the council had sundry meetings with the French ambassador about mutual restoration of prizes taken contrary to the peace lately agreed.[15] During 1631, 1632, and 1633 there was very little relating to foreign affairs before the privy council.[16] And so it continued.[17] Much that related to foreign matters was, indeed, being dealt with by privy councillors, for this work was being shared by the king with his counsellors much more than had once been the case. It was being done, however, not in the council, but in a standing committee of the council for foreign affairs. In 1634 one of the correspondents of Sir Thomas Roe wrote: " I will tell you what I heare. the Counsell hath beene sitting verye close all these dayes by-past; & so farre as I can learne the cause is a packet sent to the King by the French King, wherein, hee declareth a resolution to take a place lying in the Palatinat upon the Rhin, to haue a passage ouer it; the place is Udenheim alias Philips-burg." [18] There is nothing in the register of the council about this matter, however, and one is left in doubt whether this is one of many things not to be found in the register or whether the affair was really discussed in the council's committee of foreign affairs.[19] In 1635 merchants of Exeter having complained about seizure of their goods in France, the privy council sent a letter to the English ambassador asking him to do what he could.[20]

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[9] P. C. R., xxx, 4 April 1620.

[10] Spanish Transcripts, xxi, 30 May 1620.

[11] P. C. R., xxxii, 5 August 1624.

[12] *Ibid.*, xxxiii, 14 October 1625.

[13] "Les Seigneurs du Conseil ayans fait consideration part$^{re}$, de ses propositions, et deliberé meurem$^{t}$ sur icelles, auroyent trouué bon d'y faire la response qui s'ensuit": *Ibid.*, 19 June 1626.

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[14] P. C. R., xxxvi, 25 July 1627.

[15] *Ibid.*, xxxix, 2 December 1629.

[16] *Ibid.*, xli, xlii.

[17] *Ibid.*, li, lii.

[18] John Durie to Sir Thomas Roe, Westminster, 16 January 1633-4: Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Charles I, cclviii. 73.

[19] P. C. R., xliii, 3, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31 January 1633-4.

[20] *Ibid.*, xlv, 23 October 1635.

In 1605 James I had declared that foreign and domestic business daily arose which ought to be settled, some of it by the privy council, some of it by a few members only.[21] Committees for various purposes were appointed during these years, but apparently no standing committee for foreign affairs. In 1615 and the next year Gondomar speaks of a committee to treat about the Spanish marriage.[22] About December 1620, through Buckingham, the advice of James I was sent to his son-in-law, "having formerly debated and consulted it in the presence of the Prince, my Lord Duke of Lenox, Marques Hamilton, the Lord Chamberleyn, the Lord of Arundell, the Lord of Kelly, Viscount Doncaster, the Lord Digbye, the two Secretaryes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and my self, who all with one joynt consent approved what his Majestie now adviseth." [23] Of this group of eleven, besides the prince, seven, or possibly eight, were of that group of twelve who in 1623 were called by a contemporary "selected commissioners for forain affaires". In March 1623 Amerigo Salvetti, the Tuscan ambassador, wrote to his government that some of the principal lords of the council of state had just been summoned to the king in the country to choose councillors to negotiate with the ambassador from the infanta in Brussels.[24] In June John

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[21] S. P. D., James I, xii, 9 January 1604-5.

[22] Affixed to one of his letters are "Puntos que me ha dado un confidente de la Junta con los quales dize entiende se podra començar a tratar el casamiento del Principe mi S^or^ con Madonna Maria la Infanta de España" Gondomar to the king of Spain: Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, ix, 30 May 1615 (N. S.). In 1616 he mentioned "La Junta que hizo el Rey de Ynglaterra para tratar el casamiento de su hijo en España", *ibid.*, xvii. 141.

[23] Marquis of Buckingham to Elizabeth of Bohemia, December (?) 1620: *Fortescue Papers* (*Camden Society*, new series, i), pp. 147, 148.

[24] "Intanto alcuni de' principali Signori del suo Consiglio di Stato sono stati chiamati dalla Maestà Sua, d'trasferirsi in campagna da lui, credesi per fare elezione d'alcuni di loro per negoziare con questo Ambasciatore." Despatch from London, 3 March 1622-3: British Museum, Additional MS. 27962 B, fo. 265.

Chamberlain wrote that "the cheife of the counsaile", so he supposed, had been appointed to treat with the Spanish commissioners about the marriage between the prince of Wales and the infanta.[25] In November when the prince and Buckingham had returned from Spain another correspondent wrote: "It seemes, it must be onely a Committie Counsell, that shall manage these greate businesses now on foote." [26] A few days later Chamberlain wrote: "The Prince w^th^ the .D. of Buckingam and Secretarie Conway came hither the 30th of the last moneth, the next day was a meeting of certain selected counsaillors at St James, where the .L. of Buckingam made relation in what state they found the busines of the match at their comming into Spaine and in what state they left yt." [27] A fortnight later he alluded definitely to the existence of a committee of foreign affairs consisting of twelve members: "The selected commissioners for forain affaires sit much, I thinke I forgot to send you their names, as the .L. Keper .L. Treasurer, L chamberlain .L. marshall, the two Dukes, marques Hamilton .L. of Carlile .L. Belfast, chancellor of the exchecquer and both the secretaries, wch make a full iurie." [28] In December he said that report had it "the junta or commission for forain affaires" was to be made smaller.[29]

In January 1624 the Spanish ambassador wrote to the king of Spain that the summoning of parliament had been resolved on in the privy council and also in the "junta".[30] That junta was doubtless the foreign committee, for in another letter he said it consisted of twelve members.[31] A few days later he spoke of another meeting of the junta at which the prince and Buckingham but not the king were present. Buckingham was said to have urged that the offer of the Spanish king should be rejected, that it was better to break off relations, and secure restitution of the Palatinate by force of arms.[32] It may be observed that according to the council register there were no meetings of the privy council between 3 and 20 January 1623-4. 13 January a pass was signed by six of the councillors, but neither the prince nor Buckingham appears in the list.[33] Salvetti wrote that on the arrival of an offer from Spain the king had repeatedly assembled the group of twelve councillors of state, who had deliberated about whether so favorable an offer ought to be received.[34] About the same time Chamberlain wrote that "the junta for forrain affaires" had held sessions diligently all that week. What had passed was not perfectly known, but it was rumored that five were for the Spanish match—the lord keeper, the lord treasurer, the earl marshal, Lord Weston, and Secretary Calvert, that four would not declare themselves—duke of Richmond, marquis of Hamilton, lord chamberlain, and Lord Belfast; that three were directly against it—the duke of Buckingham, who though absent had sent his vote, the earl of Carlisle, and Secretary Conway. During all this time, he said, the king had been at Newmarket, from whence the prince had come Tuesday last. A resolution about the business was said to have been carried. "Some say the junta are loth to expose themselues to the enuie that may fall upon them either way, and therefore desire to haue the rest of the counsaile interested in a matter of this weight, or yf yt proue too heauie for them to haue yt referred and debated in Parlement." [35] A few weeks later another wrote that he had learned "how the Committees for the Spanish Match weare in a sorte devided." [36] About this time the Spanish ambassador, who was writing back accounts of the happenings in England, spoke of the doings of the "junta" of twelve members.

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[25] Letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, 28 June 1623: S. P. D., James I, cxlvii.

[26] Dudley Carleton to [Sir Dudley Carleton], London, 1 November 1623: *ibid.*, cliv.

[27] Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, London, 8 November 1623: *Ibid.*, cliv.

[28] Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 22 November 1623: *ibid.*

[29] "We have a whispering that the junta or commission for forain affaires shalbe somwhat abridged in number, for though they be sworn to secresie, yet some things are found to be vented and come abrode that were better kept close." Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 20 December 1623: *ibid.*, clv.

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[30] "Oy ha habido un consejo de estado, y despues junta sobre las matherias del casamiento: dicenme que se a resuelto en él lo del Parlamento, y señalado dia para convocalle á los veinte y dos de Febrero." Marques de la Hinojosa to the king of Spain, 8 January 1624 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, xxxi. Also "Que en el Consejo de Estado y Junta de aquel dia se resoluió la combocacion del Parlamento": *ibid.*

[31] Letter of 21 January 1624 (N. S.): *ibid.*

[32] "Ayer manana huuo Junta sobre las materias corrientes, que se acauo al mismo tiempo que fué a la audiencia del Rey. Boquingan con una larga orazion, tan insustancial como mal raçonada, esforço que lo que V. Mgd ofrecia, ni hera considerable, ni lleuaua mas fin que introducir largas, y que así, lo que mas conuenia hera rromper, y por medio de las armas procurar la restitucion del Palatinado: y sin dar lugar a que se discurriesse sobre ello, estando el Principe pressente, se fué de la Junta diciendo quele esperaua el Rey." Marques de la Hinojosa to the king of Spain, 24 January 1624 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, xxxi.

[33] P. C. R., xxxii.

[34] "Ha Sua Maestà per questa occasione fatto più volte radunare l'aggiunta de 12 Signori Consiglieri di Stato; i quali hanno più volte consultato, se si debba accettare questa tanto favorevole offerta di Spagna." Despatch of 26 January 1623-4: Add. MS. 27962 C, fo. 96.

As yet there is no record in the privy council register of the appointment of a committee of the council for foreign affairs, and no record of the appointment of such a council committee seems to exist for this period, yet from numerous contemporary allusions it would appear that a committee composed of privy councillors, for foreign affairs, but dealing, as of course, principally with the engrossing Spanish relations, existed as a standing committee for some time. In June a correspondent said that the sickness of the duke of Buckingham had caused delay in the transaction of much business, "as well as my L$^{d}$ of Bristoll triall, w$^{ch}$ is to be performed before the olde Committee of the LL$^{ds}$ for foreigne affaires." [37]

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[35] Chamberlain to [Carleton], London, 31 January 1623-4: S. P. D., James I, clviii.

[36] William Pelham to Sir Edward Conway, 12 February 1623-4: *Ibid.*, clix.

Absence of information in the council records at this time about committees of the council leaves much concerning the history of this foreign committee uncertain, nor may one know exactly what happened when the council was reconstituted at the accession of Charles I. In an undated manuscript, which can probably be assigned to 1626, there is a list by Lord Keeper Coventry:

The lord treasurer
lord president
lord admiral
lord steward
earl of Carlisle
earl of Holland
Secretary Conway
Sir Dudley Carleton
Secretary Coke
chancellor of the exchequer

"These were the last Committee for Forren Services", he says; it rests with the king whether to change some of the members or add other members to treat with the states general of the United Provinces.[38] On various occasions previously temporary committees of the council had been appointed to deal with various matters, foreign among the others. In 1604 there had been a committee of four to treat with emissaries of the king of Spain and the archduke.[39] In 1617 there is mention of a committee of four to examine the complaint of a London merchant about losses at the hands of Dutchmen.[40] Now in December 1626 a committee of ten was appointed to consider a remonstrance presented to the board by the ambassador of the Low Countries, and report their advice as to what answer should be given him. The members included the lord keeper and six of the members of the foreign committee which he had described.[41]

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[37] Dudley Carleton to Sir Dudley Carleton, London, 14 June 1624: *ibid.*, clxvii.

[38] S. P. D., Charles I, xliv, 87.

[39] Public Record Office, Transcripts from Paris, xxxvii. 128.

Meanwhile, however, though there is no record of it in the council register, Charles had at the beginning of his reign constituted a powerful committee to deal with various important matters, but especially with foreign relations. 9 April 1625 the king commissioned five of the members of his council:

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord treasurer | Lord Ley |
| lord admiral | duke of Buckingham |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Pembroke |
| secretary of state | Sir Edward Conway |
| Lord Brooke | gentleman of the bedchamber |

It may be noted that Brooke, who alone among them held no great office of state, had taken part in diplomatic work some years before. They were to concern themselves especially with foreign relations, particularly with Spain; consider whether an alliance ought to be made with France; what measures must be taken to recover the Palatinate; how to establish and equip an army; how to improve the condition of the navy.[42] In neighboring countries then it would have been known as a council of state.

Shortly after this time lists of standing committees of the council appear prefixed to some of the volumes of the register of the council. About 1628 and in the following year it seems that the "Comiss$^{rs}$. for forraigne affaires" were these seven:

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[40] P. C. R., xxviii, 20 March 1616-17.

[41] *Ibid.*, xxxiv, 20 December 1626.

[42] S. P. D., Charles I, i, 9 April 1625.

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord treasurer. | Lord Weston |
| lord president. | Viscount Conway |
| earl marshal | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| lord steward | earl of Pembroke |
| earl of Carlisle | gentleman of the bedchamber |
| earl of Holland | captain of the guard |
| secretary of state | Viscount Dorchester |

In 1629 this same list appears as "Comittee for fforraine affaires."[43] Carlisle and Holland had represented England abroad in preceding years.

During this very time, it would seem, following the disaster at Ré, when it was thought necessary to call a parliament, an anonymous writer alluded probably to the work of this group: "that w$^{ch}$ is moued to be done takes away enuy and breedes noe deminution of authority; Although his Ma$^{tys}$: affaires of moste moment, be treated debated and consulted by a determinate and constant number of the most able and beste experienced of his concaile boath in busineses forraine and domestick, yet the determination and resolution rests in the Kinge w$^{th}$ whome the voice and aduice of the Duke shall then haue noe les power then at the present but much more safe and sound effect, when the same shall be thought not to rest wholy and soly upon him selfe."[44] In April a proposition from the Dutch ambassador was presented to "the LL$^{d}$ Com̄issioners for forraine affaires": it was received by Lord Dorchester in the presence of the lord president, the lord treasurer, the lord steward, the earl marshal, the earls of Dorset and Carlisle.[45]

After some years another list is prefixed in a volume of the register that relates to the period 1 June 1634-

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[43] P. C. R., xxxix. 1, 11.

[44] S. P. D., Charles I, xciv. 93.

[45] Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, Holland, cxxxix. 121.

30 June 1635, so that parts of it may be given for the latter portion of 1634, but, as will be seen, one of the names was probably inserted in 1635, and it is possible that the whole list was drawn up in 1636 or later, and it was at least corrected still later, in one instance not before 1640. The full list of this "Comittee for forraine affaires" is

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud, *admitted in March 1635* |
| lord keeper [*crossed out, marked dead*] | Baron Coventry, *lord keeper 1625-1640* |
| lord treasurer | Richard, Lord Weston, later earl of Portland, *1628-1635*<br>William Juxon, bishop of London *1636-1641* |
| earl of Arundel and Surrey [*inserted*] | earl marshal |
| earl of Carlisle [*crossed out, marked dead*] | *groom of the stole, deceased 25 April 1636* |
| earl of Holland | high steward to the queen<br>groom of the stole, *1636-1642* |
| Lord Cottington [*crossed out*] | chancellor of the exchequer |
| comptroller [*crossed out*] | Sir Henry Vane, senior, *1628-1640* |
| secretary Coke | |
| secretary Windebank | |

It should be said that although Cottington's name is crossed out, he was apparently being consulted about secret affairs in the early part of 1635.[46]

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[46] P. C. R., xliv. 3; N. Barozzi and G. Berchet, *Relazioni degli Stati Europei Lette al Senato dagli Ambasciatori Veneti nel Secolo Decimosettimo* (1856-78), 4th series, I. 311.

Similarly as of about 1636, or somewhat later, is given another list of the "Comittee for Forraine affaires": [47]

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord keeper (*crossed out*) | Baron Coventry |
| lord treasurer | bishop of London |
| earl marshal (*inserted*) | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| earl of Holland | groom of the stole |
| Lord Cottington (*crossed out*) | chancellor of the exchequer |
| comptroller (*crossed out*) | Sir Henry Vane |
| Secretary Coke | |
| Secretary Windebank | |

Save for omission of the earl of Carlisle, this is virtually the list given two years before, with its erasures and additions.

For about 1638 the list of the "Comitte for Forraine affaires" is: [48]

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord treasurer (*inserted*) | bishop of London |
| lord keeper (*crossed out*) | Baron Coventry |
| earl marshal (*inserted*) | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| lord treasurer (*crossed out*) | |

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[47] P. C. R., xlvii. 1. Since this list does not include Carlisle, it was probably drawn up after 25 April.

[48] *Ibid.*, xlix. 1.

| | |
|---|---|
| earl of Holland | groom of the stole |
| Lord Cottington (*crossed out*) | chancellor of the exchequer |
| comptroller (*crossed out*) | Sir Henry Vane |
| Secretary Coke | |
| Secretary Windebank | |

But the only difference seems to result from the writer having first put the lord treasurer in the wrong place.

In the register for 1639 it appears:[49]

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord treasurer | bishop of London |
| earl marshal | Earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| earl of Holland | groom of the stole |
| Secretary Coke | |
| Secretary Windebank | |

This list of the " Committee for Forraine affaires " differs from the preceding only in that at last the writer has omitted the names long before crossed; but the known activities of Cottington and Vane make it not certain that they had ceased to be members. For this period no other lists of the foreign committee occur in the register, and although there is some mention of it elsewhere for a while, this committee along with other standing committees and the council itself presently disappeared in the confusion of the times and the civil wars that followed.

Of the structure of the foreign committee during this period much is very uncertain. Obviously it contained the most important and most trusted ones of the king's council. Buckingham—the all-powerful favorite, the lord keeper, the lord treasurer, the lord chamberlain—earl of Pembroke, the two secretaries were in the foreign committee of James I. Buckingham, the lord treasurer, the lord chamberlain, one of the secretaries were in the small powerful committee established by Charles I for foreign affairs and other great matters. About 1628 the committee of foreign affairs contained the lord treasurer, the lord president, the earl marshal, the lord steward—who was also lord chamberlain, the earl of Carlisle, the earl of Holland, and Viscount Dorchester—one of the secretaries of state. Thereafter the personnel of the body changed, the principal alterations coming from the admission of Archbishop Laud who was rising to a position of favor and power second only to what Buckingham had held, the absence of a lord president—the office was vacant for a long time after 1631, the death of Pembroke—the lord steward—after which the office was for some time vacant—and of the earl of Carlisle, the dropping out, apparently, of the chancellor of the exchequer—Lord Cottington and Sir Henry Vane—the comptroller of the household, though such omission may have been temporary only, and the inclusion of both secretaries of state. Laud was admitted to the committee of foreign affairs in March 1635.[50] The earl of Carlisle died in 1636; the lord keeper—Sir Thomas Coventry, afterwards Lord Coventry—in 1640. It may have been that each of them dropped out of the committee before his death, and that for a time Cottington and the comptroller ceased attending also. In the absence of anything like a complete journal of the committee during these years with merely a series of lists which appear largely to be copies one of the other not representing precisely the situation at any particular time in such fashion that the membership for that time can now be determined, one cannot be certain either when most of the members were admitted or dropped or of the exact membership at any time. In the autumn of 1639 the lord admiral—earl of Northumberland, the lord deputy—Viscount Wentworth, and the master of the horse—the marquis of Hamilton were added to the committee.[51] About the same time the earl of Holland—groom of the stole—seems to have dropped out. All in all it may be said that the committee of foreign affairs beginning in the time of James I apparently with twelve members was diminished during the time of Charles I to eight, perhaps, possibly to six, then increased and diminished again.

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[49] P. C. R., li, 1.

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[50] Laud, *Works* (Oxford, 1847–60), iii. 223. In the previous year, concerning some letters from the chancellor of Sweden, he wrote: "although I am in Court, yet am I as far almost from being able to give him assistance as you are, for all these negotiations are handled only at the Foreign Committee, of which number I am none." Letter to Sir Thomas Roe, Lambeth, 22 April 1634: *Works,* vii. 74.

Of attendance at the committee, of the time and place of meeting, of method and procedure therein, little or nothing can be learned now. As was the case with the foreign committee and " the committee " in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the committee of foreign affairs during the earlier Stuart period seems to have assembled frequently on Sunday. " The Forren Comittye sate againe that daye ", writes Laud of 19 July 1635, which was Sunday. " Your despatch was read to the King and the Committee on Sunday last ", he writes to Wentworth later that year, referring it would seem to the committee of foreign affairs.[52] In 1639 despatches from Spain were on Sunday " communicated to the forraine Committe ".[53]

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[51] *Sydney Papers* (London, 1746), ii. 613, 614.

[52] Letter to Elizabeth, queen of Bohemia, 26 July 1635: S. P. D., Charles I, ccxciv; letter to Wentworth, 26 October 1635: *Works,* vii. 200, 201.

[53] Earl of Northumberland to the earl of Leicester, London, 19 December 1639: *Sydney Papers* (London, 1746), ii. 625.

Many meetings were held on other days. In 1638 Laud wrote to Sir Thomas Roe about certain correspondence: "The King hath pursued this intention of his in a very handsome way; for upon Tuesday last, October 16, he proposed it to the Foreign Committee as a proposition fit to be considered of."[54] It can only be supposed that the meetings were held in residences where the king was or else in the palace at Whitehall. How often meetings were held, who attended, how many, can only be conjectured. In general, perhaps, there was one meeting each week; sometimes there were more. Doubtless most members usually attended. Probably the king often presided.

The work of the committee of foreign affairs at this time concerned diplomacy and foreign relations, but like the foreign committees later on it dealt also with other matters of importance, and it was in effect a smaller, more powerful council within the privy council itself.

In 1635 when the ambassador extraordinary from the king of France proposed to Charles I that he unite with the French and the Dutch to recover the Palatinate, "his Ma. hath remitted him to treate w^t the Forain Comittee", and sundry meetings were held.[55] Somewhat later, after a meeting of the committee of foreign affairs Laud wrote to the queen of Bohemia that nothing before resolved on having been altered, "I Can wright noe more Concerninge the Prince yo^r sonne then as before."[56] In 1639 the "fforraigne Com̄ittee" dealt with matters concerning the ill-fated Spanish fleet ruined by the Dutch in the Downs.[57] A little later despatches of Sir Thomas Roe were read before the committee,[58] and on another occasion despatches from Spain were read there.[59]

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[54] Letter of 18 October 1638: *Works,* vii. 494.

[55] Sir Francis Windebank to Lord Feilding, 23 April 1635: *Denbigh MSS., Historical MSS. Commission,* 6th report, appendix, p. 277.

[56] S. P. D., Charles I, ccxciv, 26 July 1635.

[57] Secretary Windebank to Sir Balthasar Gerbier—English resident with the governor of Flanders, London, 18 October 1639: *ibid.,* ccccxxxi. 35.

It is probable, though one cannot be certain, that the ship money scheme was first worked out in the committee of foreign affairs. During the summer of 1634 the plan in general and methods for raising the money were considered at meetings of "the committee". There is no record in the council register of appointment of any committee of the council to deal with ship money. The notes of the meetings of "the committee" are very scanty, with no lists of the members present. Records of two of the meetings, however, refer to some of those who were there: the lord keeper, the lord treasurer, Secretary Coke and Secretary Windebank, all of them members of the foreign committee at this time.[60]

In 1635 a despatch from Viscount Wentworth, the lord deputy of Ireland, was read at the committee of foreign affairs.[61] In 1639 at a meeting of the privy council at Whitehall, with the king and eighteen present, a petition from Colonel Goring, governor of Portsmouth, to which were annexed estimates, made by order of the council, about supplies of ammunition and of provisions for the town, were referred for consideration to "the Lords Cōmittees for forraine Affayres" and the earl of Newport, master of the ordnance, who were to report to the king and the council.[62] In the troublesome times towards the end of this year the earl of Northumberland, speaking of the "Foreign Committee", wrote: "This day the whole council is to attend the King, to advise upon his present affairs, and to hear what he has been consulting with the committee."[63]

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[58] Laud to Roe, 21 November 1639: *Works*, vii. 594.

[59] *Sydney Papers*, ii. 625.

[60] P. C. R., xliii, xliv; S. P. D., Charles I, cclxx. 55, cclxxii, 22 July 1634.

[61] Laud, *Works*, vii. 200, 201.

[62] S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxxxi, 20 October 1639. There is nothing about this in P. C. R., l.

The committee of the privy council for foreign affairs disappears during the confusion of the struggle between Charles I and the Long Parliament. During the civil wars Charles with some of his trusted assistants carried on the foreign affairs of the crown, while parliament itself, especially through its own committee of both kingdoms, undertook to conduct diplomatic intercourse with other powers. In December 1644 the committee of both kingdoms appointed five of its members to be a sub-committee to consider foreign letters, report upon them to the committee of both kingdoms, and prepare answers.[64] Two years later the committee of both kingdoms referred a letter to a committee of foreign affairs.[65] In 1647 a foreign committee proposed an answer to the king of Denmark's offer of mediation.[66] The year after a committee of foreign affairs recommended that an ordinance be approved by parliament.[67] In July of that year a petition concerning a ship taken in 1637 by the Spanish West India fleet was referred by the commons to a committee for foreign affairs, consisting of lords and commons. They appointed a day for hearing and presently gave an order with respect to the matter.[68]

Under the commonwealth diplomacy and foreign relations, like the other parts of government, were managed by parliament and the successive councils of state. From time to time various standing committees of these councils were appointed by the several councils. Apparently, it was not until 1651 that a committee to deal with foreign affairs was appointed, by the fourth council of state. In December of that year was appointed a " Committee for businesse of Trade and forreigne affaires ", containing sixteen members, to whom ten others were subsequently added.[69] In December 1652 the fifth council of state appointed a standing committee for trade, plantations and foreign affairs consisting of twenty-one members.[70] To this " Committee for Forreigne Affaires " eight other members were added at various times shortly after.[71] In July 1653, during the time of the nominated parliament a seventh council of state was constituted. In August this council of state appointed seven of its members to be a committee of foreign affairs: [72]

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[63] Letter to the earl of Leicester, London, 5 December 1639: *Northumberland MSS., H. M. C.*, 3d report, appendix, pp. 78, 79.

[64] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Interregnum, E 8, 5 December 1644.

[65] *Ibid.*, E 13, 20 April 1646.

[66] *MSS. of the Duke of Portland, H. M. C.*, 13th report, appendix, i. 413.

[67] *House of Lords MSS., H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 31.

[68] S. P. D., Charles I, dxvi. 67, 67i, 67ii, 67iii.

Walter Strickland
Henry Lawrence
Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper
Lord Lisle
Sir Charles Wolseley
Samuel Moyer
Sir Gilbert Pickering

In November the eighth council of state constituted a standing committee for foreign affairs, consisting of thirteen members.[73]

With the establishment of the protectorate in December 1653 the protector's council, presently known as the privy council, supplanted the line of commonwealth councils of state. Of the protector's council various temporary committees were soon appointed, and presently also standing committees, but the records remaining seem insufficient, and there are allusions to committees of whose appointment apparently there is no record. In February 1654 a petition to Cromwell bears the endorsement: "His Highnes pleasure is That the Consideraco̅n of this Petico̅n and Certif$^{t}$ annexed be Referred to the Com̅ittee for fforreine Affaires".[74] In June at a meeting of the council the protector seems to have appointed several standing committees among which was one "for Treatyes with fforeigne Ministers", containing four members.[75]

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[69] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 66, 17, 30 December 1651, 2, 8, 13 January 1651-2, 8 July, 17 August, 30 October 1652.

[70] *Ibid.*, I 68, 2 December 1652.

[71] *Ibid.*, I 132, last page.

[72] *Ibid.*, I 70, 16 August 1653.

[73] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 72, 8 November 1653.

In January 1660 a "Comm$^{tee}$ for forreigne Affaires" was appointed by the tenth council of state, when, after the end of the protectorate, a shadow of the commonwealth had reappeared for a moment.[76] Already, about July 1659 a committee to peruse the papers of foreign ministers had been appointed by the ninth council of state.[77] In February 1660 was appointed a committee to consider the proposals of the ambassadors from Portugal.[78] The records of councils and committees for these years are often so fragmentary or so slight that one cannot be certain that more than a little of the story has been recovered.

Of the organization and the work of these bodies during the interregnum period a little may be ascertained. The different committees varied in size. There were sixteen in the committee appointed in 1651, and this number was subsequently increased to twenty-six. The committee of 1652 contained twenty-one members at first, and presently it had twenty-nine. The two foreign committees constituted in 1653 contained respectively seven and thirteen members. Statements about the numbers in later committees seem to be wanting.

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[74] *Ibid.*, lxviii, 1 February 1653-4.

[75] *Ibid.*, I 75, 20 June 1654.

[76] *Ibid.*, I 86, col. 5.

[77] *Ibid.*, I 85, col. 60.

[78] *Ibid.*, I 86, col. 21.

Not much can be learned about attendance of members, though one may suspect that as with most other committees, excepting the stable, powerful standing foreign committees of normal times, attendance was poor and varied much. Of the foreign committee at work in 1652—apparently the committee established in December of the year preceding—an order book remains, with minutes of some of the meetings. Of four meetings recorded in May 1652 the attendance was respectively eight, seven, five, nine. At one meeting in June there were six; at another thirteen. At a meeting in July six were present.[79] In December 1652 it was ordered " That the Coram of the Comĩttee for fforreigne affaires bee any three or more of them." Previously the quorum had been five.[80]

The place of meeting was probably in Whitehall. Meetings were arranged to be held regularly, or else appointed or announced from time to time at pleasure. In November 1653 it was ordered that Monday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings be the times for regular sittings of the committee of foreign affairs. Shortly after change was made to Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings. Meanwhile special summons for additional meetings might be issued.[81] In 1652 order was given that a certain one come to the committee for foreign affairs on the following Tuesday morning at eight o'clock.[82] Shortly after the council of state was bidden to sit the day following at nine o'clock in the morning, and the foreign committee two hours earlier.[83] In November another order issued for the committee to meet the next morning at eight, and the council at ten.[84] In the summer of 1653 there was order " That the Com̃ittee of the Councell for fforeigne affaires doe meet to morrow in the afternoone." [85] In October the council of state bade the committee meet the following morning at seven o'clock, " and soe from day to day untill they have dispatched those matters which are depending before them by reference from the Councell." [86]

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[79] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 131, 5, 14, 26, 28 May, 11, 16 June, 21 July 1652.

[80] *Ibid.,* I 68, 13 December 1652.

[81] *Ibid.,* I 72, 9, 10, 12 November 1653.

[82] *Ibid.,* I 67, 29 May 1652.

[83] *Ibid.,* I 29, 18 June 1652.

A chairman chosen from time to time for a short period presided over the committee. In March 1653 the committee appointed Strickland chairman for a month.[87] The committee was served by a clerk of the council of state. In 1652 the fifth council of state ordered that allowance of eight hundred pounds should be made to Thurloe for the year to come, " in Considerac̄on of his attending as Clerke to the Councell, and the Committee for fforreigne affaires ".[88]

The work of the commonwealth foreign committees was mostly in connection with trade and foreign affairs, but their importance seems to have increased during 1652 and 1653 and many petitions and various matters were referred to them by the councils of state. Concerning committees for foreign affairs under the protectorate less can be ascertained, but apparently their importance and activity were less, and there was greater tendency for foreign matters and other things to be handled in the protector's council itself rather than to be given to committees of the council. Under the commonwealth the committee for foreign affairs sometimes appointed sub-committees to which it delegated particular parts of its work, doubtless for first investigation and details. In February 1653 the committee appointed a "Sub-Comīttee" to consider a particular matter.[89] That year the council of state ordered all its members who were of the foreign committee, and who were not of a committee of the council appointed to manage a treaty with the Dutch—a committee apparently not mentioned previously in the council records, to meet as a committee for foreign affairs, sitting every morning to dispatch matters depending before them by reference from the council for settlement of which public ministers and agents were pressing. From time to time they must report to the council.[90] That is to say, on this occasion a part of the committee for foreign affairs was to act with others as a particular committee about a foreign matter, while the rest of the committee for foreign affairs was to continue to act as a committee generally for foreign affairs.

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[84] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 35, 12 November 1652.

[85] *Ibid.,* I 69, 8 June 1653.

[86] *Ibid.,* I 71, 27 October 1653.

[87] *Ibid.,* I 133, 23 March 1652-3.

[88] *Ibid.,* I 68, 1 December 1652.

According to the order book of the committee of foreign affairs, the following business was settled at a meeting of eight in September 1652: order that the affair of a foreigner be considered on the following Friday morning, and that Dr. Walker—judge advocate of the admiralty court—should be sent for to be present then; that the petition of a certain one be considered on Friday morning, he to have witnesses, another mentioned in the petition to be summoned likewise; at that meeting a paper of the Danish ambassador to be taken up; a statement previously ordered drawn up about the arrest of a servant of the Danish ambassador to be brought in a week hence; two of the members to look over the papers of a foreigner and report at the Friday meeting, all papers relating to the matter to be looked up and sent to them.[91] Since the record is embodied in what is merely an order book it is possible that other business was also transacted.

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[89] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 132, 4 February 1652-3; also I 133, 23 March 1652-3.

[90] *Ibid.*, I 72, 16 November 1653.

From council many matters were referred to the committee. In March 1652 a petition to the council of state was referred to the committee for foreign affairs.[92] A little later the committee was ordered by the council to consider what had been propounded by the Dutch ambassador, also the several treaties between England and Denmark, then report to the council of state.[93] About the same time it was settled at the council that the committee for foreign affairs should give order to print the book *Mare Clausum*.[94] In December the council bade the committee consider some fit person to be sent to Sweden as resident for the commonwealth, speedy report to be made.[95] In February 1653 the committee for foreign affairs was commanded to prepare instructions for such of the admiralty committee as were to go to the fleet at Portsmouth, reporting to the council next day.[96] A little later an order of parliament referring to the council of state a letter from the states of Holland and West Friesland, the council to prepare an answer, was by the council referred to the committee for foreign affairs.[97] In June it was ordered " That the peticõn of Brian Harrison be referred to the Cõmittee for fforeigne affaires." [98] A week later business concerning Hamburg, debated in the council of state, was likewise referred.[99]

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[91] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 131, 1 September 1652.

[92] *Ibid.,* xxiii, 25 March 1651-2.

[93] *Ibid.,* I 29, 17 June 1652.

[94] *Ibid.,* 26 June 1652.

[95] *Ibid.,* I 68, 9 December 1652.

[96] *Ibid.,* I 40, 24 February 1652-3.

[97] *Ibid.,* I 41, 24 March 1652-3.

[98] *Ibid.,* I 69, 4 June 1653.

[99] *Ibid.,* 11 June 1653.

At the committee were considered also matters addressed to the committee directly or connected therewith. In May 1652 a representation or memorial was presented to "the Comittie of the Councell of State for Trade & fforraine affaires".[100] In November, at a meeting of a committee attended by twelve, John Thurloe was ordered to draw up a paper to be offered to the council from the committee that afternoon, according to the debate in the committee, to be returned as a general answer to the Spanish ambassador's paper delivered the day before, subject to the approval of the council.[101] Shortly after Thurloe was ordered to draw up and bring in to the committee on the following Wednesday a letter to be sent to the senate of Hamburg, answering theirs concerning a Hamburg ship taken at Barbados.[102]

At this time the committee that dealt with foreign affairs seemed to increase in importance, matters being given to its management that had formerly gone to other committees.[103] During 1652 and 1653 the foreign committee considered papers from foreign governments or their representatives, and gave opinion upon them or prepared answers to be presented to the council of state to be used by the council if its members thought well. The committee advised the referring of matters by the council of state to other bodies, for example, the admiralty committee. It summoned persons to attend it. It appointed its own sub-committees.[104]

In January 1653 at a meeting of five, order was given that the judges of the admiralty be asked to proceed in the cases of ships before the admiralty court, said to belong to Sweden, as quickly as might be.[105] About the same time the committee ordered a report of its resolutions on a petition of Levant merchants to be drawn up and presented to the council.[106] In March a committee attended by eight ordered that it be reported to the council of state as the opinion of the committee that control of the whole Kennebeck river in America should be granted to the town of New Plymouth, for seven years, on probation.[107] In 1658 the foreign committee arranged to meet representatives of Sweden with respect to a treaty with that country.[108]

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[100] S. P. D., Interregnum, xxiv. 24.
[101] *Ibid.*, I 131, 26 November 1652.
[102] *Ibid.*, I 132, 22 December 1652.
[103] *Ibid.*, I 67.
[104] *Ibid.*, I 131, 132, 133.
[105] *Ibid.*, I 132, 3 January 1652-3.

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[106] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 132, 24 January 1652-3.
[107] *Ibid.*, I 133, 16 March 1652-3.
[108] *Ibid.*, I 84, col. 36.

# CHAPTER III

## COMMITTEES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1660-1679

ALMOST immediately after the restoration and after the constitution of the privy council of Charles II in England, appeared a committee for foreign affairs. In this period information about council committees is fuller and more detailed than for some of the years just preceding, better also than for the period of the earlier Stuarts. None the less, data remaining about the committees of Charles's council just after the beginning of his reign in England seem to be not complete. A short time after his return there are references to a foreign committee, and there is in minutes of its meetings taken by members and in other miscellaneous sources much to be learned about what it did. There is, however, no record of the appointment of any standing committee for foreign affairs in the register of the privy council at this time. Moreover, the name of this committee does not occur in lists of committees drawn up during the period when it existed. There is good reason to believe that meetings of the foreign committee were held during June 1660, information coming from notes or minutes of the meetings made by Sir Edward Nicholas, one of the secretaries of state. Yet, in a list endorsed "Committees", drawn up by Nicholas himself in July—a list which mentions the committee for foreign plantations, a committee for the French ambassador, the committee of trade, a committee for the earl marshal of England, a committee to treat with the Hanse ambassador, a committee to treat with the ambassador from Hamburg, and the committee for Newfoundland—there is no mention of any foreign committee.[1] There is nothing about a foreign committee in another list of twenty-seven committees appointed in the period 8 August 1660 to 24 October 1662.[2] There is no reference to such a body in a long list of committees for the first four years of the reign of Charles II.[3] And no such committee is listed in another longer array of " Co̅mittees appointed by the Councell Boord ", 8 August 1660 to 2 January 1666-7.[4] One might, therefore, remain in doubt whether this so-called " foreign committee " was a committee of the council whose appointment was not mentioned in the register—there were undoubtedly instances where the clerk failed to make such record, or whether it was indeed composed of privy councillors, though not a council committee formally appointed but rather a body regarded informally as a committee, much as was the case with the committee of foreign affairs or " the committee " after 1688.

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[1] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic. Charles II, vii. 71, 72.

During 1660, as was sometimes the case later on, Charles II appointed several particular, temporary committees to deal with items of foreign business. In August the king in a council of twenty-three " acquainted the Board with the earnest desire of the Portugall Ambassador in a late private Audience, That Com$^{rs}$ might bee appointed to treat with Him." Accordingly Charles named eight of the council, or any four of them, a committee for that purpose. Shortly after in a council of twenty he added five others to this group.[5] In September a committee of nine was appointed to treat with the ambassador of Denmark.[6] In November, in a council of the king and twenty-two at Whitehall, a committee of nine was appointed to treat with the Spanish ambassador.[7]

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[2] Add. MS. 37820, fos. 65-68.

[3] " List of Committees of the Councel till $\overline{64}$ Nov.": S.P.D., Charles II, civ. 139-148.

[4] *Ibid.,* cclxxvi. 374-384.

[5] P.C.R., liv, 8 August, 5 September 1660.

[6] *Ibid.,* 7 September 1660.

[7] *Ibid.,* lv, 14 November 1660.

At the same time eight members of the council, or any three of them, were appointed a committee to treat with the ambassador from the United Provinces.[8] In March 1661 eight of the council were appointed a committee to deal with the agent of Russia.[9] A little later, at a council of Charles and twenty at Whitehall, " A Paper from the Ambassado$^{rs}$ of the Netherlands, accepting his Ma$^{ty}$ Mediation with the Ambassador from the King of Portugall in their behalfe this day read, and returned to the Comittee appointed, to give full Answer unto It, in conformity to his Ma$^{ties}$ Sense thereof expressed at the Board." [10] Various other committees were appointed to treat with foreign ambassadors or to deal with particular foreign business, but none of them was constituted a standing committee to deal generally with the king's foreign affairs.

Meanwhile such a group had made its appearance. Information respecting it comes largely from the earl of Clarendon, its principal member, and Secretary Nicholas, who preserved minutes of some of the meetings. Writing in 1667, when he was attempting defence and vindication after his fall, Clarendon declared to parliament that " Before His Majesty's coming into *England*, He was constantly attended by the then Marquis of *Ormond*, the late Lord *Culpepper*, and Mr. Secretary *Nicholas*, who were equally trusted with myself; and without whose joint Advice and Concurrence, when they were all present (as some of them always were), I never gave any Counsel." And that " As soon as it pleased God to bring His Majesty into *England*, He established His Privy Council; and shortly, out of them, a Number of Honourable Persons of great Reputation, who for the most Part are still alive, as a Committee for Foreign Affairs, and Consideration of such Things as in the Nature of them required much Secrecy."[11] According to the notes of Nicholas, the first meeting was held 18 June: present the lord chancellor, the marquis of Ormonde—lord steward, the duke of Albemarle—lord general, the earl of Southampton—lord treasurer, Lord Culpepper, and the two secretaries of state—Sir Edward Nicholas and Sir William Morrice.[12] Clarendon says: "The treasurer, marquis of Ormond, the general, with the two secretaries of state, were of that secret committee with the chancellor; which, under the notion of foreign affairs, were appointed by the king to consult all his affairs before they come to a public debate."[13] Doubtless other members were added to this committee later on, though of that there appears to be no record.

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[8] P. C. R., lv, 14 November 1660.

[9] *Ibid.*, 22 March 1660-1.

[10] *Ibid.*, 5 April 1661.

At a meeting at the lord chancellor's house in 1663, when the sale of Dunkirk was being discussed, were present the king and eight: the Duke of York, the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, the lord general, the earl of Sandwich, Sir George Carteret—who was vice-chamberlain, and the two secretaries of state—Morrice and Sir Henry Bennet.[14] When Downing's plan for the appropriation of supply was discussed at Clarendon's house in 1665 the king was present with six members of the committee: the duke of York, the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, Lord Ashley, Lord Arlington—secretary of state, and Sir William Coventry—commissioner of the navy. In addition were present the attorney general, the solicitor general, and Downing.[15] Concerning attendance no regular or

[11] *Lords' Journals*, xii. 155.

[12] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 168.

[13] *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon . . . . in Which Is Included, a Continuation of His History of the Grand Rebellion, Written by Himself* (Oxford, 1857), i. 315.

[14] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation*, ii. 11, 12.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 225.

detailed information remains. It is probable that the king always came. In 1667 Clarendon declared that Charles had always been at the meetings.[16] About the same time he asserted that Arlington and Coventry—who had become one of the commissioners of the treasury—were always present " in the most secret council ".[17]

If the principal information about the importance and scope of this committee of foreign affairs comes from accounts written afterwards by the earl of Clarendon, the main source for its working is a body of notes kept by Secretary Nicholas. These memoranda or rough minutes cover the period 13 June to 14 December 1660 and 2 January to 19 August 1661.[18] They are very hard to read and their purport is often not clear. Not that they were necessarily written in greatest haste, for sometimes the writer had time to draw a pattern or design between one item and another.[19] But evidently these notes were taken in the midst of the business itself, and the handwriting of the secretary seems to have been bad on such occasions, while he made use of so many signs and abbreviations as to make virtually a system of partial shorthand.

That some of these notes concern meetings of the foreign committee is not to be doubted, since on occasion they are endorsed by the writer " Com$^{tee}$ fforeign aff$^{rs}$ " or the like. Most of them, however, bear the endorsement " C. B.", which might be supposed to mean council board and refer to meetings of the privy council or contain agenda for the council, in which case the date might indicate either the day of the council meeting when the business noted was to be done or nothing more than the day on which the memoranda were written. All of them concern the king's affairs, and much of the matter is undoubtedly council business. Many of these notes however, bear dates when according to the council register there was no meeting of the council.[20]

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[16] " And I am confident this Committee never transacted any Thing of Moment, His Majesty being always present, without presenting the same first to the Council Board." *Lords' Journals,* xii. 155.

[17] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* ii, 487.

[18] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 167-187, xliv. 214-232.

[19] *Ibid.,* xliv. 214.

That some of the notes concern council business and correspond with what was done in the council at meetings so dated there cannot be doubt. In June 1660 one of the groups of minutes of Nicholas headed " C. B." contains the note: " Lo: Genll Montague to be sworne a pr. Councello$^{r}$ ". At a meeting of the privy council held the same day " his Ma$^{tie}$ sitting in Councell and by his Royall Command the Lord Generall Montague was sworne one of his Ma$^{ties}$ most Hon$^{ble}$ privy Councell ".[21] One other matter listed in Nicholas's notes appears in the council meeting of that day, but otherwise the minutes in the register do not correspond with those taken by the secretary for his own use.[22] At the beginning of January Nicholas writes: " sheriff of Cambridgesh to be changed." On the same day in a council at Whitehall, the petition of a certain one was read. He had been nominated for sheriff, but had not the property requisite for support of the office. The king ordering the lord chancellor to present to him the roll of the sheriffs, inserted another name, and the petitioner was discharged.[23] Shortly after, according to Nicholas, " The L$^{ds}$ Justices & Couc$^{ll}$ of Irl$^{ds}$ lres & their declaracon cg the continuance of the Excise for support of the Army there [?] till further order. The King & the C. B. approve of w$^{t}$ they have dunne & of the declaracon." At a meeting of the privy council that day a letter from two of the lords justices and the council of Ireland and a proclamation signed by them for continuance of the excise considered. Ordered by the king in council " that M$^{r}$ Secretary Nicholas doe by Letter signify unto the said Lord Justices and Counsell his Ma$^{tie}$ gratious approbation of their proceedings." [24] In September Nicholas has a minute: " cg the ffre. Ambdors clayme of . . . Nova Scotia or Canada in America." At a meeting of the privy council that day " It was this day Ordered That " eight of the council " be appointed a Com̄ittee to treate with the ffrench Ambassador." [25]

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[20] For example there are notes endorsed " C. B." 2, 9, 11, 16, 19, 23 January, 20 February, 1, 4, 6, 8 March 1660-1, 27 March, 4, 10, 15, 18, 22, 25, 31 May, 5, 7, 10, 14, 19, 21 June, 3, 4, 10, 12, 17, 19 July, 2, 7, 9, 14, 19 August 1661: S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 214-232. During the same period there were meetings of the council: *2, 4, 7, 8, *11, *16, 18, *23, 25, 28, 31 January, 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 18, *20, 22, 25, 26, 28 February, *1, *4, *6, *8, 13, 15, 20, 22 March 1660–1, 26, 28, 29 March, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 17, 19, 26, 29 April, 1, 3, *10, *15, 17, *18, *22, 24, *25, *31 May, *5, *7, *10, *14, *19, *21, 26, 28 June, *3, 5, *10, *12, *17, *19, 24, 26, 28, 29 31 July, *2, *7, *9, 12, *14, 16, *19 August 1661: P. C. R., lv.

[21] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 167; P. C. R., liv, 14 June 1660.

[22] It is, of course, by no means certain in respect of a meeting of the privy council that all the business transacted at the meeting or all that was noted in the first record taken by the clerk or some member present was afterward embodied in the permanent record written in the register of the council. See the author's, *The Privy Council of England,* i. 130-133, ii. 59-61.

In other cases there is no such agreement. 2 January 1661 Nicholas writes: " a day to be appointed of purpose for the C. B. to perfect the Treaty with the Dan: Abdr." [26] There was no meeting of the council that day, according to the register, and in the register there is nothing of the matter. 19 January Nicholas has a memorandum " cg the Treaty with Denmark " which is endorsed " C. B." There was no meeting of the council that day, it would seem, and the next meeting recorded in the register came four days later, with nothing about a treaty with Denmark in the minutes.[27] 6 November Nicholas has notes, endorsed "C. B.", about consideration of a treaty with the Dutch and other things. At a meeting of the privy council that day, according to the register there was nothing about the treaty, and save for one item the register does not mention what Nicholas records.[28] Occasionally Nicholas recounts something that had already been dealt with in the privy council. At a council meeting in May it was resolved that presently a proclamation should be issued, giving pardon to offenders, the proclamation to be published on coronation day. "In which proclamation also all the Quakers are to be declared to be sett at liberty, & M$^{r}$ Attorney Generall then received the directions of the Board to draw up a Proclamation accordingly." For the next day Nicholas writes: "M$^{r}$ Atto$^{y}$ to p$^{r}$pare a prlamacon to sett all Quakers at lbtie".[29]

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[23] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 214; P. C. R., lv, 2 January 1660-1.

[24] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 214; P. C. R., lv, 16 January 1660-1.

[25] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 233; P. C. R., lv, 6 September 1661.

[26] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 214.

[27] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv.; P. C. R., lv, 23 January 1660-1.

In summary, it would seem that these notes were made by Nicholas for his own use and convenience, at the time when directions were given him or when business in which he took part was transacted. Some of the memoranda undoubtedly record what was done at the committee of foreign affairs to which Clarendon alludes. A greater number are endorsed "C. B." and relate to business of the council board. It is possible that some of them refer to what was actually done in the privy council. Apparently, however, most of the notes so endorsed have to do with what was to be brought forward at council. Doubtless, as was more the case afterwards, it was one of the duties of the secretary of state to prepare lists of agenda for the council. It is not improbable that such agenda were being largely agreed on in meetings of the foreign committee, and hence that some of the notes were endorsed as of meetings of the committee of foreign affairs and others were simply endorsed as containing business to be brought before the council. Clarendon afterwards wrote that the foreign committee was appointed for preliminary consideration of the king's affairs.[30] 12 July 1660 Nicholas has a memorandum endorsed "C. B.", concerning whether "the King shall give audience to the Ambassador of Portugall." Four days later in a council at Whitehall, "Upon a serious Debate, whether the Portugall Ambassador should be admitted to have Audience w$^{th}$ his Ma$^{tie}$, It was at Length Resolved by his Ma$^{tie}$ in Councill, To admitt & receive him in the Condition of Amb$^{r}$ from the King of Portugall." [31] Evidently, a great deal of privy council business at this time was being arranged and decided beforehand either by the king and his secretaries of state or by a small group of councillors with, or possibly sometimes without, the king. While some of the notes concern what took place in the council, most of what Nicholas thus recorded seems to have been dealt with in the council later, or else not at all, so far as the register shows.

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[28] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 247; P. C. R., lv, 6 November 1661.

[29] P. C. R., lv, 3 May 1661; S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 220.

Of the procedure of this committee, which was doubtless intimate and informal in many cases, not much can be known, since few rules appear to have been written. In June 1660 Nicholas notes: "Com$^{tee}$ of foreign aff$^{res}$ to meete No more at 9". He then says it will meet in future at ten o'clock, Monday and Thursday mornings.[32] Special meetings or meetings at other times were often arranged. "Munday at 3 a clock to meete for Portg$^{ll}$ l$\overline{rs}$, & for 5 a clock to consider of the l$\overline{rs}$ of Nova Scotia", writes Nicholas, 14 June 1661.[33] In 1662, perhaps in August, during a meeting of the privy council the chancellor, as was often his custom at such times, exchanged notes with the king: [34]

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[30] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* i. 315.

[31] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 173; P. C. R., liv, 16 July 1660.

[32] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 168.

[33] S. P. D., Charles II, xliv. 224. This meeting is not described by any endorsement, but there was no meeting of the privy council on the following Monday, which was 17 June 1661. P. C. R., lv.

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| *Chancellor:* | Do you not thinke the businesse of Tanger & the Dutch treaty fitt to be first debated at the Committee for forrainge affayres: and if so, you may appointe, them, to meete on Fryday in the afternoon, wher you please. |
| *King:* | At your house. |

Sometimes meetings were held on Sunday, as had been the case with the committee of foreign affairs before the civil wars, and as was so with "the committee" and the cabinet in the latter part of the seventeenth century.[35]

Meetings were held in various places, never it would seem in the privy council chamber. In June 1660 it was arranged that the regular meetings should be in the lord chancellor's room.[36] "I pray resolue", writes the chancellor to Charles the following July, "that the Secrett Committee may attende you tomorrow in the afternoone at my chamber, ther are many thinges of greate moment to be thought of." [37] This was at Worcester House, where the lord chancellor lodged.[38] "I will be with you at Woster house on sunday in the afternoone, do you warne those L^ds^ you thinke fitt to meete me there", wrote Charles in 1661.[39] Shortly after he told the chancellor it would be necessary to meet at the general's on Friday before council about the business of Portugal, and this may have concerned a meeting of the committee of foreign affairs.[40]

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[34] *Notes which Passed at Meetings of the Privy Council between Charles II and the Earl of Clarendon, 1660-1667*, etc. (Roxburghe Club Publications, London, 1896), p. 72.

[35] *Notes Passed at Privy Council*, p. 79.

[36] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 168.

[37] *Notes Passed at Privy Council*, p. 5.

[38] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation*, i. 408.

[39] *Notes Passed at Privy Council*, p. 49.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

In 1665, after some members of the committee had considered Downing's plan for amending the bill of supply, objections being made by Ashley, " his majesty was contented that the matter should be debated in his presence; and because the chancellor was in his bed, thought his chamber to be the fittest place for the consultation." [41]

The work of the committee consisted of various things, for while foreign business made its principal task, like the committees of foreign affairs before and after this period, the group dealt also with other important matters of policy and rule. The memoranda of Nicholas have to do with the revenue and expenditures of the king, with the excise, with disbanding the army, with the armed forces and the fleet, with calling parliament, with local regulation, and a variety of other things, as well as with foreign affairs. The information given by Clarendon relates mostly to diplomacy and foreign regulations, though he also speaks of Ireland, finance, and other matters. In the minutes of a meeting endorsed " Com$^{tee}$ fforeigne aff$^{res}$ " 19 June 1660, among other things it is noted that a certain one shall be forbidden the court; that another is a dangerous person; Sir Charles Herbert to attend; the lord steward to consider how the king's house may be settled in a more frugal way; letters to be sent to the king of France and to the king of Spain to give notice of his majesty's being established on his throne; the Irish committee to report to the council next day.[42]

In July 1660 Charles suggested to the lord chancellor that at the meeting of the secret committee next day he might have to resolve whom to send as deputy into Ireland.[43] A year later he wrote—what may relate to a committee of foreign affairs: " I do beleeue it will be necessary to meete privatly vpon this businesse of Ireland, not only to take the generall resolution upon the act, but likewise sett an end to what concernes my Ld S[t]eward [—Ormonde]".[44] In 1665 Downing's plan to alter the power of the lord treasurer and amend the bill of supply was debated, apparently, at the committee, though it would seem that some members were not consulted about it at first.[45]

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[41] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation*, ii. 216, 217, 224.

[42] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 169, 170.

[43] *Notes Passed at Privy Council*, p. 5.

The principal duty, however, was naturally the handling of foreign business and assisting in diplomatic negotiations. In December 1661 the chancellor suggested a meeting of the foreign committee about sending an emissary to Holland.[46] That year Charles came one day to the chancellor's house, and being with him alone said the ambassador from Portugal had suggested a marriage between his majesty and the infanta, offering good terms and an alliance. The chancellor counselled secrecy for the present. So, Charles arranged that the lord treasurer, Ormonde, the lord chamberlain, and Secretary Nicholas should meet at Clarendon's house, where the king would come and communicate the business to them. This was done, and after some debate, the matter agreed. Then Charles "appointed all those lords with the same secrecy to enter into a treaty with the ambassador; which was begun between them accordingly." The project of the treaty did not remain hidden, but the proposed marriage was kept a deep secret. After various negotiations, the king thought not fit to make any further exceptions, but resolved to assemble "his whole privy-council", and communicate the matter. Then only, at a full council, from which but one member was absent, the king explained the affair and asked the council's advice. Each member delivered his opinion. All agreed that it was very fit for the king to conclude such a treaty.[47] In February 1662 Clarendon at the council wrote to the king concerning negotiations with Portugal: [48]

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[44] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[45] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation*, ii. 216, 217, 224, 225.

[46] *Notes Passed at Privy Council*, p. 48.

> Though this particular you know is not to be mencioned, yett ther are many things arysinge from this new message from Lisbone, very necessary to be well waighed; therfore you shall do well to thinke, of callinge your committee togither, if you intende it for to morrow morninge, you will bidd one of the Secretaryes warne the rest, and that the Generall be ther.

So also with respect to negotiations before the sale of Dunkirk to France. Clarendon afterwards related how the vast expense of keeping up Tangier, Bombay, Jamaica, and Dunkirk, with the insufficient revenue of the king, made the lord treasurer anxious that Dunkirk be disposed of, since he was advised it was of little importance to England. He held conferences with the general, and with the lord chancellor, who was opposed to letting it go. After debates with the treasurer, the general, and the duke of York, Charles II "thought it so counsellable a thing, that he resolved to have it debated before that committee which he trusted in his most secret affairs." The chancellor being lame of the gout the meeting was held at his house. The matter was there fully explained by the king, then debated in all aspects pertaining to Spain, France, and the Dutch. "Upon this full deliberation, his majesty inclined rather to give it up to France than to Spain; but deferred any positive resolution till he had imparted the whole matter to the council-board, where the debate was again resumed." Here, after long discussion, only one lord opposed the king's plan. France had sent a representative to treat about terms. After he had waited upon the king, Charles appointed the treasurer, the chancellor, and the general, and one or two others to negotiate the sale.[49]

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[47] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* i. 416, 417, 418, 420, 421, 446, 447; Bodleian Library, Clarendon MS. 74, fos. 378, 379.

[48] *Notes Passed at Privy Council,* p. 60.

During all this Clarendon several times referred to the negotiations and either to the committee of foreign affairs or to small private meetings, in notes which he gave to Charles at privy council meetings. On one occasion: " If you had leasure this afternoone, why should you not appointe your brother, my L^d^ Treasurer, & the Generall to attend you at 4 or 5 of the clocke, at Worcester house, that wee might ther agree of the whole methode of carryinge on this affayre." [50] Another time he wrote:

> If it be possible I will attende your Ma$^{ty}$ to morrow morninge before I goe to the house; but if I should [not?] I pray be at Worcester house on Sunday as soone as may be, that wee may settle all that which concernes France, so that I may speake with the Ambassador agayne the next day.
>
> I have appointed a meetinge at my Chamber this night, to præpare an account for your Ma$^{ty}$ concerninge the Bill of Corporac̄ons.

To this the king: " I will not faile on Sunday." [51]

In 1667 after some time during which overtures from France for a treaty were considered, was taken up also the question of restoration of Poleroon in the East Indies, which the Dutch had taken from the East India Company. " The king thought it now time to receive the advice of his whole council-board upon this affair [the treaty], which had been hitherto only debated before the committee for foreign affairs." [52]

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[49] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* ii. 11, 12-15, 16.

[50] *Notes Passed at Privy Council,* p. 71.

[51] *Ibid.,* p. 79.

[52] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* ii. 396.

Thus more or less continuous existence of a committee of foreign affairs can be traced from 1660 to 1667. Whether the committee presently lapsed and was reconstituted cannot be known, but in October 1667 Sir Joseph Williamson records in his journal: "All foreigne affaires are putt into the hands of My Lord Keeper, Lord Generall, Lord Privy Seale, & the two Secrȳēs of State, as a Cōmittee of the Councell Board."[53] It might seem that here, perhaps, was an innovation: that whereas previously there had been a committee of foreign affairs, composed indeed of members of the privy council but not definitely appointed as a committee of the council, Williamson's reference is to a council committee formally appointed. But according to the council register there was no meeting of the privy council that day, nor is there any reference to such appointment in preceding meetings. So that this committee has the same status, it would seem, as the foreign committee which appears in 1660. It may be added that all the members but one of the committee said thus to have been appointed for foreign affairs in 1667 were appointed on the standing committee of the council for foreign affairs constituted in 1668, and that while the principal body of the minutes of the committee appointed in February 1668 begins with March of that year, yet the first date given in the collection is 24 November 1667.[54]

In 1668 Charles II, reorganizing the committees of his privy council, constituted four standing committees. One of them was the "Committee of Forraine Affayres" consisting of the duke of York, who was understood to be of all the standing committees, and eight other members:

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[53] S. P. D., Charles II, ccxxxi. 68.

[54] Public Record Office, State Papers, Foreign, Entry Books, Miscellaneous, clxxvi.

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| The lord high admiral | duke of York |
| joint admiral of the fleet | Prince Rupert |
| lord keeper | Sir Orlando Bridgeman |
| lord privy seal | Lord Robartes |
| gentleman of the king's bedchamber | duke of Buckingham |
| lord general | duke of Albemarle |
| lord steward | duke of Ormonde |
| secretary of state | Lord Arlington |
| secretary of state | Sir William Morrice |

This committee was to deal not only with foreign affairs but " the Corresponding with Justices of the Peace, and other his Ma$^{ts}$ Officers and Ministers in the severall Countyes of the Kingdome, Concerning the Temper of the Kingdome &c$^{t}$ " [55] Sir Joseph Williamson in his journal described this committee as " that of Foreigne affaires, & of the gr̄all Peace of & temper of the Kingdome w$^{th}$ in ".[56]

From time to time, evidently, other members were added. At a meeting of the committee in October 1671 ten besides the king were present: the duke of York, Prince Rupert, the lord keeper, the duke of Monmouth, the duke of Ormonde, the earl of Lauderdale, lord Arlington, Lord Ashley, the treasurer of the household, and Secretary Trevor.[57] At a meeting held about a year later the king was attended by eleven: the duke of York, Prince Rupert, the lord chancellor, the duke of Newcastle (?), the earl of Lauderdale, the earl of Arlington, Lord Clifford, Secretary Coventry, the vice-chamberlain, Sir Thomas Osborne—treasurer of the navy, and Sir Robert Long—auditor of the exchequer. They may not all have been members. Several others, certainly outsiders, were present at this meeting.[58] Altogether the membership, which was at first nine, seems to have increased somewhat as time went on.

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[55] British Museum, Egerton MS. 2543, fo. 205. According to the endorsement this " Regulation of Committees of the Councill " was read and ordered in the privy council 31 January 1667-8. It was not entered in the register, however, until some days later: P. C. R., lx, 12 February 1667-8.

[56] S. P. D., Charles II, ccliii, 31 January 1667-8.

[57] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 22 October 1671.

In 1675 the Venetian secretary resident in England referred to the body as "the committee (*consulta*) for foreign affairs".[59] In the next year the French emissary spoke of the members as "commissioners (*commissaires*) for the secret affairs".[60] The body, though a committee of the council, was sometimes referred to as a council itself. In 1677 Secretary Coventry wrote to the English ambassador at Nymwegen: "This day yours to M^r^ Secretary Williamson was read in Councill of fforreign affairs, where your friends varyed in Opinion."[61]

According to the regulations made when the committee was appointed the place of meeting was to be in Whitehall, in the office of Arlington, one of the secretaries of state.[62] "There hath been a Comittee for Forreigne Affaires in My Lords [Arlington's] Chamber all this afternoon", a correspondent said in 1668.[63] In 1677 Sir Joseph Williamson wrote to the lord mayor of London: "The King would have you come to him about 6. or 7. a clock at M^r^ Secry Coventry's Lodgings at the hour of the Foreigne Committee."[64] Next year he noted that there was to be a "meeting at Sec. Coventryes to consider Dutch Lettrs", which probably refers to the committee of foreign affairs.[65] Actually, however, the committee at times met more frequently at Essex House.[66] In 1678 Sir Joseph Williamson mentions meetings of the committee at Windsor.[67]

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[58] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 24 November 1672.

[59] Public Record Office, Venetian Transcripts, xlv. 192.

[60] Transcripts from Paris, cxxxiv. 342.

[61] Letter of 9 January 1676-7: Add. MS. 25125, fo. 17.

[62] Egerton MS. 2543, fo. 205.

[63] J. Swaddell to Sir Joseph Williamson, 25 August 1668: S. P. D., Charles II, ccxlv.

[64] Letter of 14 December 1677: Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Entry Books, xliii. 179.

At times the members met with considerable regularity. In 1668 it is noted in the minutes: "This Comittee appointed to meet Sundays & Thursdays—at three afternone." [68] In 1672: "This Comittee to meet Mondayes Thursdayes morning. Saturdayes afternoon." [69] Not seldom were meetings held on Sunday—both before and after this time a day when such meetings were apt to be held. In 1674 Secretary Coventry speaks of such a meeting.[70] In 1677 Sir Joseph Williamson wrote to Sir Leoline Jenkins, representative of England at Nymwegen, that his despatch must await "the Meeteing of the fforreigne Comttee of Sunday".[71] The next year he wrote to him that the foreign committee would meet the following Sunday.[72] Shortly after he mentioned receiving letters from Sir Leoline "(the two latter being arrived Since the last fforreigne Comittee of Sunday)".[73] "On Sunday at the Committee of forraign affairs it was determined for you to have leave to return", he wrote to another of the ambassadors that year.[74] Additional meetings were specially appointed. Minutes of a meeting taken by Williamson in 1668 end with the note: "Tomorrow at nine to meet againe." [75] During April 1668 there were eight meetings, during May one, during June three, in July three, in September two.[76] In 1676 there were six meetings during January, three in February, two in March, two in April, four in May, two in June, four in July.[77]

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[65] Public Record Office, State Papers, Miscellaneous, ccxv, 27 April 1678.

[66] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi.

[67] Bodleian Library, Western MS., 35376, fos. 124, 125.

[68] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 22 October 1668.

[69] *Ibid.,* clxxvii, March 1672.

[70] Letter to Sir George Downing, 21 August 1674: Add. MS. 25123, fo. 118.

[71] Letter of 23 November 1677: Western MS. 35376, fo. 29.

[72] Letter of 30 August 1678: *ibid.,* fo. 124.

[73] Letter of 24 September 1678: *ibid.,* fo. 129.

[74] Letter to Lord Ambassador Hyde, 28 May 1678: Add. MS. 25125, fo. 51.

Powerful and important as was the committee, its members, like those of other councils and committees, seem to have attended with little regularity at times. In 1676 Coventry wrote: "The Truth is either Sickness, busyness or Devotion have made the Meetings of the Committee of forreigne Affairs so rare, and those that Compose it so few, that I have not had the opportunity of speaking to the King, and the Lord Treasurer together since the writing my last to yo$^{r}$ Excellency." [78] During these years the minutes of the committee, which had at first been interesting and full, became scanty. Whether this resulted from occasional assembling of the committee, from loss of some of the minutes, or from carelessness with which minutes of the meetings were taken, would be uncertain were it not for the existence of supplementary information in another place.

For the committee of foreign affairs constituted in 1668 there are five volumes of minutes and miscellaneous notes, very valuable and interesting, the principal source of information about what this committee did and how the work was done.[79] Some are certainly the minutes or copies of the minutes which were taken at the meetings of the committee, perhaps by one or the other of the secretaries of state. Such minutes were evidently taken by Coventry, for among his papers remain some minutes of the proceedings at the committee of foreign affairs written on quarto sheets of gilt edged paper.[80] For 1676 there are among the state papers domestic numerous minutes of meetings endorsed "For. Com̄ittee", hard to read, written by Sir Joseph Williamson, formerly secretary to Arlington, and at this time himself secretary of state.[81] It is probable that the memoranda thus taken were afterwards copied out in regular volumes of minutes to form a permanent record, much as the records of the privy council were put in the register of the council. In the case of the volumes of the privy council register, especially after the restoration, the writing is fair and carefully done, and the record has the appearance of finality and completeness. In the minutes of the committee of foreign affairs the writing is often poor and seems hastily done; there are many blank parts of the several volumes; often for considerable intervals no minutes occur. The first volume (clxxvi) relates to the period 24 March 1668 to 22 June 1672; the second (clxxvii) to the period 5 March 1671-2 to 4 May 1673; these two contain most of the record preserved in all of the volumes; the third (clxxviii) contains no minutes and has merely scattered memoranda, relating to a few months in 1677, for the most part the year not being given; the fourth (clxxix) has brief notes for the period 6 January 1675-6 to 18 November 1677; the last one (clxxx) deals with the period 20 August 1676 to 25 August 1678. The volumes thus involve some reduplication, but there are numerous gaps which none of them fill. The record was better begun than maintained. At first there are lists of the members present, and time and place of meetings are given. Towards the end the minutes become much less formal: frequently no lists of those attending are given, and the place of meeting is not stated. Whether the record was now more carelessly kept, or whether under the attacks of the house of commons upon the king's foreign committee meetings were held less frequently and records more secretly kept or even not put in writing might thus be matter of conjecture. Actually, however, it is evident from letter books of Secretary Williamson that the committee continued to work with activity undiminished during 1677-1679.[82] The exact relation between the preliminary drafts and the records in the volumes of minutes is also difficult to determine. For the period 17 September to 2 November 1676 there is a gap both in the volume and in Williamson's notes,[83] which might make it appear that one is a better copy of the other. At other times, however, the hasty notes of Williamson contain some things not in the more permanent record, while in some cases the register of minutes has what is wanting in the secretary's notes. It may be added that additional information concerning the meetings of the foreign committee occurs at random in various sources, especially in the state papers domestic and the letter books of the secretaries of state.[84]

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[75] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 23 March 1667-8.

[76] *Ibid.*, 23, 24 March 1667-8, 25, 30, 31 March, 8, 10, 11, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27 April, 28 May, 16, 28 29 June, 3, 13, 29 July, 15, 28 September 1668.

[77] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 6, 9, 15, 19, 23, 30 January, 6, 12, 20 February, 5, 12 March 1675-6, 16, 23 April, 7, 19, 21, 28 May, 11, 18 June, 2, 9, 20, 30 July 1676.

[78] Letter to Lord Berkeley, 26 December 1676: Add. MS. 25119, fo. 75.

[79] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi-clxxx.

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[80] *H. M. C.*, 4th report, appendix, p. 234.

[81] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi.

At meetings of the committee attendance varied, as of course. At various meetings in 1668, when the membership was nine, there were present two, three, four, five, six, and seven.[85] In 1669 there was a meeting at Essex

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[82] Western MSS. 35375, 35376. This affords striking illustration of the danger attendant on conclusion deduced from absence of records merely. From the journal of the committee of foreign affairs it might be supposed that during 1673-8 the committee's activity came nearly to an end. The chance survival of collateral records in another place indicates that the body continued to work with vigor little impaired.

[83] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxix; S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi.

[84] S. P. D., Entry Books, li, 6 April 1678; xliii, 30 July 1678; Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, King William's Chest, i, 22 July 1678; S. P. D., Charles II, ccccviii, 30 November 1678.

[85] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi.

House of the king and eight.[86] In 1672 Charles was attended by six " at L. Arlington's Lodgeings ".[87] On another occasion there were only two besides the king.[88] Still later that year, however, there was a meeting of the committee at which were present the king and fifteen, several not members being called in.[89] In 1678 a meeting of five assembled to consult with the Dutch ministers.[90]

At a meeting of the foreign committee in March 1668 were present Prince Rupert, the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, and the two secretaries of state.[91] At a meeting of the "Cōmittee of Foreigne Affaires &c." in May were present the duke of York, Prince Rupert, the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, and the two secretaries.[92] In October a meeting at Essex House was attended by the duke, the prince, the lord keeper, the duke of Ormonde—lord lieutenant of Ireland, who was probably expected to come to meetings of the committee when he was in England, and the two secretaries.[93] At a meeting in April 1670 were present, besides the king, the duke, the prince, the lord keeper, the lord steward, the earl of Lauderdale—secretary of state and principal minister in Scotland, the treasurer of the household, and the two secretaries.[94] At a foreign committee held at Arlington's lodgings in 1672 there were the king, the duke, the prince, the earl of Lauderdale, Arlington, Ashley, and the treasurer.[95]

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[86] *Ibid.,* clxxvi, 14 November 1669.

[87] *Ibid.,* clxxvii, 6 March 1671-2.

[88] *Ibid.,* 8 August 1672.

[89] *Ibid.,* 24 November 1672.

[90] *Ibid.,* clxxx, 3 May 1678. While the account of this meeting is in the volume of minutes of the committee of foreign affairs, the list of those present leaves some doubt whether this was a meeting of the committee. It is difficult to be certain of the membership of the committee of foreign affairs at any particular time after the appointment in 1668, however, since the principal information about membership is contained in lists of those given as present at sessions.

[91] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 23 March 1667-8.

[92] *Ibid.,* 28 May 1668.

[93] *Ibid.,* 22 October 1668.

[94] *Ibid.,* 10 April 1670.

It is probable that the king was generally present at meetings of the committee of foreign affairs, though it is certain that he was not always there. During 1668 he was absent much more frequently than present at the meetings recorded in the journal of the committee.[96] He was present, however, at other meetings not recorded in this register.[97] It might seem that the king and the duke of York were expected as a matter of course, for in minutes of a "For. Comittee" taken by Sir Joseph Williamson in 1676 he notes: "The K. and D. not there." [98] "On Munday next", said a writer in 1673, "the King hath appointed to heare it debated before the Com̄ittee for Forrain affaires, whether the Office of M$^{r}$ of the Ordnance in Ireland shall stand, or fall into the office under S$^{r}$ Tho. Chicheley in England." [99] Next year in respect of a matter about which the earl of Essex had given information to the king the earl of Arlington was much disturbed. With passion he "pretended th$^{t}$ he would be heard by his Ma$^{ty}$ at the Com̄ittee for forrain Affaires", and that he did not doubt of his being able to satisfy his majesty.[100] In 1675 Secretary Coventry gave instructions to one of the residents in Italy: "these were his Majesties Orders to me at the Committee of forraign affairs last Night".[101] In December 1677 instructions for Sidney Godolphin, envoy extraordinary to the governor of Flanders, were approved at the committee of foreign affairs, the king present.[102] "I had the Kings Leave", Sir Joseph Williamson wrote a little later, "upon my Moc̄on at a fforreigne Com̄ittee to allow m$^{r}$ Chandlers Bills".[103] In January 1678, during the negotiations for the Treaty of Nymwegen, he wrote to Laurence Hyde that his communications had all been read and considered that morning "before his Ma$^{ty}$ and the L$^{ds}$ of the fforeign Affaires".[104] In April letters and despatches from abroad were debated at the committee in the king's presence.[105] Shortly after the Dutch envoys attended Charles at the committee, with respect to negotiations at Nymwegen.[106] In November a paper is endorsed by Williamson: "showne to the K. at the For. Com̄ittee 1. Dec. $\overline{78}$." [107]

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[95] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 6 March 1671-2

[96] *Ibid.*, clxxvi.

[97] For example, S. P. D., Charles II, cclviii, 9 April 1668.

[98] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 16 January 1675-6.

[99] Lord Conway to the earl of Essex, 29 November 1673: *Essex Papers*, i (Camden Society, new series, xlvii), p. 146.

[100] William Harbord to the earl of Essex, 21 April 1674: *Ibid.*, i. 214, 215.

[101] Letter to Sir Thomas Higgins, 8/18 February 1674-5: Add. MS. 25121, fo. 12.

As at other committees, and at the privy council, outsiders were called in when their advice was wanted or information was required, and their names were sometimes appended to the lists of those given as present. In 1668 the Dutch ambassadors attended the foreign committee repeatedly. The Swedish ambassador also came in at this time.[108] In 1678 Williamson notes: "D. Amb$^{r}$ called to For. Com̄ittee." [109] At a meeting of the committee in 1668, "M$^{r}$ Waren called in about the affairs of Salley." [110] At a meeting in 1672, four or more not members were summoned for a lengthy discussion about the choice of a speaker for the house of commons.[111] Indeed, from the lists of those present it is difficult to decide whether in the later years of its existence the membership of this committee was considerably enlarged or whether at times other members of the privy council were called into the committee whenever their presence was desired.

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[102] *MSS. of the Marquis of Bath, H. M. C.*, 4th report, appendix, p. 232.

[103] Letter to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 28 December 1677: Western MS. 35376, fo. 40.

[104] Letter of 22 January 1677-8: *Ibid.*, 35375, fo. 106.

[105] S. P., Miscellaneous, ccxv, 1 April 1678; Western MS. 35375, fo. 288.

[106] S. P. M., ccxv, 21 April 1678.

[107] S. P. D., Charles II, ccccviii, 30 November 1678.

[108] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, March, April 1668.

[109] S. P. M., ccxv, 2 March 1677-8.

[110] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 28 September 1668.

[111] *Ibid.*, clxxvii, 24 November 1672.

The special position of the foreign committee among the other committees of the privy council was clearly recognized when it was established in 1668. The regulations then given out in council stated that nothing should be referred to any committee of the council until first read at the council board, but it was specially provided that this rule did not apply to the committee of foreign affairs.[112] Because of the committee's power and importance it often seemed to contemporaries a council. It was to the foreign committee probably that Coventry referred when he wrote with respect to a matter concerning Hamburg: "this was the last resolution that was made upon that Point at the private Councell." [113] Shortly after he affirmed that a recent communication from the lord lieutenant of Ireland "was read to the King in Councill of forreign affairs".[114] In December Coventry wrote that he could communicate no decision about certain matters, "because there hath been no Councill of forraign affairs." [115] "At 6 at night", wrote Sir Heneage Finch in 1673, "I received the Great Seal from his Majesty at Whitehall, and was made Custos Sigilli. I entered into the Council of Foreign Affairs." [116]

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[112] P. C. R., lx, 12 February 1667-8.

[113] Secretary Coventry to the duke of Richmond, 12 July 1672: Add. MS. 25117, fo. 6.

[114] Letter to the lord lieutenant, 29 August 1672: Add. MS. 25122, fo. 20, also 26 September 1673: *ibid.*, fo. 152.

[115] Letter to the duke of Richmond, 27 December 1672: Add. MS. 25117, fo. 65.

[116] *Finch MSS., H. M. C.*, 7th Report, appendix, p. 514.

It is probable that in respect of what was done in this committee particular secrecy was expected and on the whole well preserved. In 1672 at a meeting of the King and eleven to which four others had been called in, the king said at the end: "will call them againe later end of this weeke, or the next. & comands an absolute silence in all that has been said here &c." [117] In 1678 a correspondent said: "What I writ concerning the Militia has not, I believe, taken vent, for what was said was in the Committee of Foreign Affairs." [118] Except for what one now can find in the minutes once intended to be kept secret and in communications exchanged by officials there is generally no information whatever about what was said at meetings of the foreign committee, and generally there seems to have been about its activities a mystery that might have awakened the suspicions of other members of the privy council and aroused hostility of the opposition in parliament. In the committee was preserved that secrecy supposed to appertain to what was done in privy council but usually not achieved there. None the less, as was the case with the committees of foreign affairs of Charles I and with the first foreign committee of Charles II, outsiders knew at times in a general way what was being done, often they knew what would come before the committee, and when its meetings were held. This came not only from gossip and inevitable communication, but from references made in the privy council itself, and from correspondence among government officials.

In 1673 the Venetian ambassador reported to his government: "Whilst I was writing my letters of last Friday, to your Serenity, the King was in council with the

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[117] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 24 November 1672.

[118] The earl of Arran to the duke of Ormonde, 26 February 1677-8: *H. M. C.*, *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 121.

Duke of York—Prince Rupert—Dukes of Buckingham and Lauderdale—the Lords Treasurer—Chancellor—and Arlington Secretary of State—debating for six consecutive hours about the resolution to be formed with regard to the Parliament."[119] In the next year Secretary Coventry wrote to one of the ambassadors that there had been no meeting of the committee of foreign affairs and so no resolution to communicate to him.[120] In June 1675 one of the correspondents of the earl of Essex informed him that on solicitation of Secretary Coventry the committee of foreign affairs was summoned: "The Councill mett, there was present King, Duke, Keeper, Treasurer, Lodderdale, Coventry, Williamson"—to deal with some business of the earl of Essex.[121] Not long after Coventry told the bishop of Bath and Wells it had been resolved at the foreign committee to pass the Taunton charter with some amendments.[122] Concerning Irish business a correspondent said in 1677: "It has bin twice before Committee of Foreign Affairs where some of the late *Farmers* were last Sunday (*King* not being there) soundly reprimanded by Treasurer."[123] About this time Lauderdale wrote to the earl of Danby that hesitation about a matter seemed strange to him seeing that order upon it had been given

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[119] Despatch of Girolamo Alberti, 20 March 1673 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliii. 483. No meeting of the committee of foreign affairs on 7 March O. S. (Friday) is recorded in S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, but with respect to this business the register records meetings of the committee 23 February and 9 March. At the latter of these meetings were present the king, the duke of York, Prince Rupert, the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, the duke of Monmouth, Lauderdale, and the two secretaries of state.

[120] Letter to Ambassador Jenkins, 21 April 1674: Add. MS. 25123, fo. 70.

[121] William Harbord to the earl of Essex, 12 June 1675: *Essex Papers, 1675-1677* (Camden Society, third series, xxiv), pp. 30, 31.

[122] Letter of 8 February 1675-6: Add. MS. 25125, fo. 4.

[123] Sir Cyril Wyche to the earl of Essex, 8 May 1677: *Essex Papers, 1675-1677*, p. 131.

"at the Comitte of forraine affaires." [124] In July 1678 Sir William Temple wrote to the duke of Ormonde that in a discussion of foreign matters "at the Foreign Committee", it was asserted that France was aiming at universal monarchy.[125] In November the duke of York declared in the house of lords that he would withdraw himself from all places where any affairs of the nation were brought up, "and would no more be present either at the Committee of Foreign Affairs or the Admiralty".[126]

Business of the foreign committee was at times communicated to members of the committee not present when the business was dealt with. In April 1678 one of Ormonde's letters was sent by Coventry to the lord treasurer. It had been read the night preceding before his majesty at the committee of foreign affairs, and generally it had been approved; but Coventry now sent it to the lord treasurer for his opinion.[127]

Business transacted at the committee had mostly to do with foreign relations—with diplomatic correspondence, with instructions to representatives abroad, with negotiations, and with treaties, but many important domestic matters were also dealt with—affairs of parliament, religion, finance, preservation of order and peace, general questions of the king's policy in the administration of his kingdom, and a variety of other matters, while business relating to Scotland and Ireland, and even to the plantations came from time to time before the committee. That is to say, the committee of foreign affairs acted as a committee with respect to foreign business but was also a small interior council for the management of any or all of the king's important affairs. The privy council was becoming a body for details and routine, and for formal approval. The important work, the preliminary consideration, the effective advice, the real decision, all took place in the committee of foreign affairs. The work of the committee was done carefully apart. When necessary its decisions were communicated to the privy council for formal sanction.[128]

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[124] Letter of 28 August 1677: *Lauderdale Papers,* iii (Camden Society, new series, xxxviii), p. 86.

[125] Letter of 2 July 1678: *H.M.C., Ormonde MSS.,* new series, iv. 160.

[126] Henry Thynne to the duke of Ormonde, 5 November 1678: *ibid.,* p. 227.

[127] S.P.D., Entry Books, li, 6 April 1678.

Despite its great importance and power the committee of foreign affairs continued to be a committee of the privy council, and as in the case of other committees, business was referred to it from the council. On the other hand, what the committee did if it was to be published or put into visible effect, required the formal approval of the council, while the committee sometimes found it convenient to have the council deliberate upon business and itself make the decision.

At a council of the king and twenty-five at Whitehall in 1668, a representation of the council of trade about Dutch ships allowed to go to New York, business concerning Surinam, and a memorial of the resident of Sweden about unloading cargoes of pitch and tar from certain Swedish ships, were all ordered to be referred "to the R$^{t}$ Hono$^{ble}$ the Lords appointed a Com$^{tee}$ of this Boord for fforraine Affaires to take the same into their serious Consideration & represent to his Ma$^{ty}$ in Councill their Advice thereupon with all convenient speed."[129] In January 1670, in a council of the king and seventeen, a petition of Ferdinando Gorges, stating that Massachusetts authorities had seized his province of Maine, asking restoration, was referred to the committee of trade and plantations. The committee examining were satisfied that his allegations were true. This was reported to the king in a council of twenty-two in May. "But it appearing to be a matter of Importance; It was thought fitt, & accordingly Ordered by his Ma$^{tie}$ in Councill, That the same be . . . Referred to the Consideration of the Right Hono$^{ble}$ the Lords the Com̄ittee for Forreigne Affayres."[130]

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[128] It is interesting to note that during this period the Dutch made use of a similar body in the conduct of their affairs. In December 1677 Laurence Hyde wrote to Sir Joseph Williamson that he had just had an interview with the prince of Orange in respect of keeping secret certain matters proposed in connection with the negotiations taking place at Nymwegen, saying to the prince it was the opinion of the king of England that the matter should not be divulged. "To this the Prince answered me in these Words, Wee have a Committee of Forreigne Affaires, who are sworn to Secrecy, and to them the Project shall be first proposed": if this committee would sign the agreement without recourse to the states general the agreement would be kept secret, otherwise it must go to the states. Letter from the Hague, 28 December / 7 January 1677-8: Western MS. 35375, fo. 28.

In the committee, reports were prepared for the king or for the council, and sometimes resolution was made to bring matters to the council. In 1668 there was a "Report &c of the Forreigne Comittee".[131] At a meeting in September 1668, seven present, was considered a second memorial of the French ambassador about adjusting all differences in America. Several points for an answer were agreed on. It was then ordered: "the Draught of this Answ$^{r}$ to be read at Councell &c but first the Memor$^{ll}$ to be read & the Sense of the Councell to be taken upon it, & the Answer to be made out of that." A few days later the king in privy council ordered reply to be given by Lord Arlington, secretary of state.[132] In November an address of the council of trade about the Dutch trading to New York was read at the foreign committee, and Colonel Nichols ordered to attend. Three days later in a committee of the king and six at Essex House, "the whole matter to be brought before the Councell tomorrow,

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[129] P. C. R., lxi, 13 November 1668.

[130] *Ibid.*, lxii, 26 January 1669-70, 11 May 1670.

[131] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, March 1667-8.

[132] *Ibid.*, 15 September 1668; P. C. R., lxi, 21 September 1668.

& Coll. Nicholls to attend." The next day Charles in privy council ordered revocation of passes allowing the Dutch to trade there.[133] In the minutes of a meeting recorded by Sir Joseph Williamson in 1676 is the item: "Dutch Amb$^{rs}$ Mem$^{ll}$ . . . agt those of Boston &c in New Engl$^{d}$ . . . Bring it to the Cncll." This was done a few days later.[134] Sometimes the foreign committee was ordered to assemble just before a meeting of the privy council. In 1671 Arlington wrote: "The Councell must be warned to attend his Ma$^{ty}$ tomorrow morneing at Whitehall, & the Com̄ittee of Forreigne affaires to attend him somewhat earlyer, viz$^{t}$ at 9 a Clock in the morneing at the Treasury Chamber." [135] It is probable that clerks of the council gave some assistance in connection with work of the committee.[136]

Foreign matters were constantly before the committee. There was much dealing with intelligence from abroad and with letters from English envoys in other countries; much considering of representations from foreign ambassadors and others, and frequent conferences with them. In December 1668 the king in council bade the foreign committee examine a letter from the king of France about St. Christophers, and draw up an answer.[137] At a session in 1676 were prepared a reply to the French ambassador and a letter to Sir William Temple.[138] About the same time a meeting of the committee was arranged to settle a negotiation with Tripoli and draw up an instruction to the English representative there.[139] A little later was considered the elector palatine's desire for good offices of the king of England with the king of France for an accommodation: "J W. to answr that the Ks part is to mediate a grall peace, not a particular, though in case the Empr Empire & allyes be agreing the K. then would be glad &c." [140] In March of that year the committee considered a memorial of the ambassador from Sweden: "The Ambr to signe it, or else to take it back. The Lords to meet & perfect the Answer to his Memorialls." [141] That same day the committee dealt with a letter from Sir William Temple, which said that by advice of the prince of Orange he had not made a certain proposition until he knew the king's pleasure further. Written thereupon in the minutes is the annotation: "must make the Proposition by all meanes, should have followed his Orders, not another's Advice." [142] In July were considered memorials of the Danish and the Dutch ministers: "An Answer to be given in writing pretty round & sharp." [143] In November a memorial of the Dutch ambassador, having to do, apparently, with English soldiers in the service of France. Thereupon resolved: [144]

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[133] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 14, 17 November 1668; P. C. R., lxi, 18 November 1668.

[134] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 30 January 1675-6; P. C. R., lxv, 11 February 1675-6.

[135] S. P. D., Charles II, ccxci, 21 June 1671.

[136] "The Papers as put rolled up into my hands yesterday at the For. Com̄ittee to be produced this day, were now produced &c. & lodged in the Clerke of the Councells hands &c." Note by Secretary Williamson: S. P. D., Charles II, ccccvi, 28 September 1678. See also below, p. 328, note 29.

[137] P. C. R., lxi, 11 December 1668.

[138] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 6 January 1675-6.

> let him prove who they are tht are raising men in En.
>
> commence. if the Ambr meant the King, he would have another kind of Answer, if his Officers, why not name them, that they may be punished.
>
> The King has well seen by the Siege of Maestricht &c. tht severall of his Matys Subjects have gone, but by his connivence, they did not.

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[139] *Ibid.,* 15 January 1675-6.

[140] *Ibid.,* 12 February 1675-6.

[141] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxix, 12 March 1675-6.

[142] *Ibid.*

[143] *Ibid.,* 9 July 1676.

[144] *Ibid.,* 26 November 1676.

In 1676 the earl of Danby noted in his diary that "Lord Feversha$^{m}$ returning fro$^{m}$ France did this day give acc$^{t}$ in the Foreigne Committee."[145] Two years later Sir Joseph Williamson wrote that the duke of Newcastle having returned to England reported upon negotiations "in the For. Com̄ittee".[146] On several occasions Dutch representatives were before what appears to have been the foreign committee.[147] In 1679 letters received from Sir William Temple and put in the king's hands were "to be produced at the next foreign Com̄ittee".[148] Some weeks later Williamson wrote to Laurence Hyde that his letters had been received, "w$^{ch}$ have been read at the foreign Com̄ittee, without any thing farther directed upon them, save to recommend still to you, to watch how the humours move on that side as to the Peace."[149]

There was evidently much consideration in general of matters abroad. In March 1668 at a committee of five the Dutch ambassador was called in, and foreign and diplomatic affairs minutely debated.[150] At a committee of six in May, treaties with England, Sweden, and Holland were brought up, and various matters relating to Holland, Sweden, France, and England were considered.[151] At a committee in 1669 business pertaining to Switzerland was discussed.[152] In a committee of the king and eight at Essex House a few weeks later matters relating to France and Holland as well as business concerning parliament and Ireland were dealt with.[153] At a committee in 1676 relations with Tripoli and capture of English merchants were taken up.[154]

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[145] Add. MS. 28040, 2 December 1676-7.

[146] S. P. M., ccxv, 10 March 1677-8.

[147] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxx, 9 April, 3 May 1678.

[148] Sir Joseph Williamson to Temple, 7 February 1678-9: Western MS. 35376, fo. 323.

[149] Letter of 19/29 March 1678-9: *ibid.*, 35375, fo. 217.

[150] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 23 March 1667-8.

[151] *Ibid.*, 28 May 1668.

[152] S. P. D., Charles II, cclxvii, 31 October 1669.

[153] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 14 November 1669.

In the committee of foreign affairs the negotiation of treaties was supervised or arranged, and peace or war decided on. At a meeting in May 1668 the lords of the committee objected to Sir Robert Southwell having signed in second place a treaty between Spain and Portugal. This was thought derogatory to the king's honor, "& Ordered it to be represented to the Board".[155] In 1676 were brought before the committee "The materialls for a Treaty of Commerce [with Denmark] framed by S^r^ G. Downing & J W."[156] In February 1678 "Van Beunigen comeing to the For. Comittee offers his thoughts in writing as to the Heads of a Treaty between Us & thm. drew them w^th^out more factions at the Table &c."[157]

In March 1672 in a committee of Charles and four—relations with the Dutch and a rupture with them having been considered at previous meetings of the foreign committee—"Draught of a Declarac̄on of Warre ag^t^ Holland produced & w^th^ amendm^ts^ approued." Next day in a privy council of twenty-three the king ordered Arlington to cause the declaration of war to be printed and published.[158] A year later negotiations for a treaty of peace with the Dutch began to be discussed in the committee.[159]

Early in 1674, Sir William Temple says that the United Provinces having intimated they would open negotiations for peace, a resolution was taken "at the private junto" to send rather than to receive an embassy upon the subject. Temple was chosen for this purpose. "My Lord

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[154] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 15 January 1675-6.

[155] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 28 May 1668.

[156] *Ibid.*, clxxix, 6 August 1676.

[157] Note by Sir Joseph Williamson: S. P. M., ccxv, 21 February 1677-8.

[158] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 16 March 1671-2; P. C. R., lxiii, 17 March 1671-2.

[159] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 31 March 1673, and following.

Arlington told me, he would not pretend the merit of having named me upon this occasion, nor could he well tell whether the King or Lord Treasurer did it first; but that the whole committee had joined in it."[160] He goes on to say that the terms to be insisted on were soon agreed on at "the foreign committee", which was composed of the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, and the two secretaries, Temple being ordered to attend for this business.[161]

In 1676 the committee of foreign affairs considered mediation in the war that continued, and the question of passports for plenipotentiaries to Nymwegen.[162] In June 1678, when the French were insisting on keeping certain towns and the Dutch were urging the English to stand by them, new orders were sent from the committee of foreign affairs "to insist upon the point of the Townes. & neutrality for Cleves."[163] A month later, immediately after the treaty signed by Temple had arrived, it was "produced before his Ma$^{\underline{tie}}$ at a Committee of forreigne affaires".[164] In December Williamson wrote to Sir William Temple: "I made a shift at the last foreign Committee to steal so much time with my Lords, before the King came in, as just to read over the Draught of the Treaty of Guaranty, but it was but just read, & no time left to debate the Matter, far from coming to a Resolūcon in it."[165]

With respect to important domestic matters and questions of policy and state, as in respect of parliament and religious matters, the committee of foreign affairs, rather than the privy council, was the body upon which the king relied for assistance and counsel. What should be done for effective management of the house of commons, whether or not a declaration of indulgence should be issued, these and other such things were matters generally not brought before the privy council until the king had made resolution in the foreign committee.

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[160] Temple, *Memoirs, Works* (London, 1814), ii. 252.

[161] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

[162] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 19 January 1675-6.

[163] Note of Williamson: S. P. M., ccxv, 18 June 1678.

[164] Williamson to Temple, 19 July 1678: S. P. D., King William's Chest, i.

[165] Letter of 10 December 1678: Western MS. 35376, fos. 317, 318.

In June 1668, at a committee of foreign affairs, the adjournment of parliament was decided, and this was formally ordered in the council two days later. According to the journal of the committee: "The parlm$^{t}$ by proca adiorned till November to be formally resolved next Councel day." In the council register the record declares that since his majesty "Hath by the Advice of his Privy Councill resolued to deferr their Meeting till November next", the attorney general shall prepare a proclamation.[166] In December 1669 Charles in council ordered the attorney general to prepare a proclamation for parliament to meet in February. In January 1670 the king in a committee of five, with a view to the assembling of parliament ordered "A meeting to be had to frame an entire Scheme of all the matter. &c."[167]

In April 1670, in a committee of foreign affairs attended by the king and eight, matters concerning parliament were arranged:[168]

> His Ma$^{ty}$ will please to thanke them for haueing done all he desired & nothing that he would not haue done.
>
> The Adjurnm$^{t}$ is to be by his Ma$^{tys}$ declareing to the Houses that he will haue them adjourne themselves till the 24. Oct. next.

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[166] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 29 June 1668; P. C. R., lx, 1 July 1668.

[167] P. C. R., lxii, 20 December 1669; S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 9 January 1669-70.

[168] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 10 April 1670.

> w$^{t}$ is s$^{d}$ in complim$^{t}$ to the Com̄ons, is to be so done, as not to overthanke them, so as to leave an argum$^{t}$ w$^{th}$ them not to perfect in the rest.

In March 1677 a foreign committee dealt with the address from parliament: "1. If presently to answer. 2. If to be given in writing." [169] In May 1678 at a Sunday meeting of the foreign committee an address from the commons asking the king to remove councillors was read. According to the journal of the committee the king's answer would be that he was not willing speedily to give the answer it deserved. Three days later Charles was present at a privy council of twenty-four, but nothing was recorded about this.[170] At this same meeting of the committee Williamson notes that it was resolved "to mind the H. Com̄ons tomorrow by me of the further supply mentioned to them yesterday by the K. &c. But afterwards the K. after the Com̄ittee up changed his mind & a For. Com̄ittee appointed for tomorrow morning. at w$^{ch}$ the Prorog$^{n}$ proved to be ordered." [171] In August Williamson wrote to Sir Leoline Jenkins: "the Preparations of the Parliam$^{t}$ together w$^{th}$ the further prosecution of the Plott has so taken up the Lords att the fforreigne Com̄ittee" that he had been delayed in dealing with some other affairs.[172] In October he told Sir William Temple: "The Foreign Committee of Sunday was so wholly taken up with the Preparations for the Meeting of the Parliament, That I had scarce time to mention any thing of foreign Business", though nothing of that sort was pressing.[173]

It was in the committee of foreign affairs that various religious measures of this reign were worked out, involving direct conflict with the parliament sometimes. In 1669 a communication about popish priests was considered in a foreign committee attended by seven, Charles being present. Here Williamson notes it was observed that some of the Catholics persecuted such of their priests as subscribed to the king's authority; hence the laws were to be let loose upon them, while the others would be passed by.[174]

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[169] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxix, 17 March 1676-7

[170] *Ibid.,* clxxx, 12 May 1678; P. C. R., lxvi, 15 May 1678.

[171] S. P. M., ccxv, 12 May 1678.

[172] Letter of 18 August 1678: Western MS. 35376, fo. 132.

[173] Letter of 22 October 1678: *ibid.,* fo. 314.

In March 1672, in a foreign committee at Lord Arlington's lodgings, present the king, duke of York, Prince Rupert, Lauderdale, Arlington, Ashley, and the treasurer, there was along with consideration of numerous foreign matters a very interesting debate:

> England.
>
> as to a Liberty in matt$^{rs}$ Ecclec̄all.
>
> The K. haue I any pow$^{r}$ to alter.
>
> E. Laud. you are supreme Gouen$^{r}$ &c.
>
> M$^{r}$ Treas. y$^{r}$ Ma$^{ty}$ has more then is thought for. may make a Vicar Gr̄all, aboue the Archb$^{p}$ &c the Act of Uniformity settles the Rule, & you cannot alter it, but you may dispense w$^{th}$ it.
>
> L. Ash. Bye th$^{t}$ Argument the K. may declare Eresyes, excommunicate, burne &c.

A week later in another foreign committee, present the same members excepting Prince Rupert, "the Declarac̄on in matt$^{rs}$ Ecclecall read & allowed. ordered to be brought to the Councell Board." Next day Charles in a privy council of seventeen ordered Arlington to cause the declaration forthwith to be printed and published. The register has no more than the bare, formal statement, followed by the text of the declaration.[175] The whole question of the king's power and the terms of the declaration had been argued minutely at four meetings of the foreign committee.[176]

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[174] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 19 December 1669.

[175] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 6, 14 March 1671-2; P. C. R., lxiii, 15 March 1671-2.

At a meeting in 1676 it was ordered that the chapel of the Portuguese ambassador in Whitehall be shut.[177] In 1678, with respect to papers relating to the alleged Polish Plot, " the Duke press'd the King and Lord Treasurer severall times that the letters might be produced and read, and the business examin'd into at the Committee of foraign affaires ".[178]

From time to time admiralty, army, and treasury matters were dealt with at the committee. In February 1672 Danby records in his diary, it was resolved by the king at the committee of foreign affairs that eleven ships should be added to the fifty intended for the next summer's service.[179] In August Charles with two members of the foreign committee considered various matters relating to the fleet.[180] In 1677 a foreign committee decided regulations for companies, garrisons, and magazines.[181] Long afterwards a writer said: " the Committee of foreign Affairs not only engrossed the King's Ear, but also in a great Measure directed the Course of Proceedings in the Treasury, Admiralty, *&c.*" [182]

Various miscellaneous domestic matters were taken up at sessions of the committee. In 1670 the king in a meeting of eight considered, among other things, the information of a Quakeress as to dangerous designs of Fifth Monarchy Men.[183] In January 1676 minutes of a meeting by Williamson include: "The Exam$^{on}$ about Words spoken at Sittingbourne &c. C$^{ll.}$ Strode's lett$^{r}$ & S$^{r}$ G. Moore's app$^{r}$hend the Women, & see if they confesse. if so well, if not send for the Men to prove it upon them." [184] At a foreign committee shortly after, among other things, a petition of Lady Portland was debated: "Let it be brought to Councell & the Lords Opinion asked one by one." [185] At another session about this time "The foolish Letters from Dorchester &c." were considered "not worth further trouble." [186] At a committee in August, among numerous foreign matters, the members considered whether a libel at Gloucester should be prosecuted.[187] Early in 1677 a certain one notes that "A Foreigne Committee was held in the afternoon at M$^{r}$ $\overline{\text{Secry}}$ Coventry's, the Earle Marshall & his Brethren had a hearing at it about some differences depending between th$^{m}$." [188] In May the king in foreign committee ordered answer to the petitions of the earl of Salisbury and the earl of Shaftesbury: that the king found their prayers very short of what they must have known would be necessary to procure their release.[189] At a committee held some months later a petition of Shaftesbury was again considered. Upon it the writer of the minutes says: "If my Lord thinks this an ill aire, the King will think of some other Prison in a better air." [190] At a foreign committee in November it was resolved to prosecute various coventiclers and rioters to the utmost.[191] In October 1678, in the indignation following the murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, a proclamation was settled at a committee of foreign affairs; the writer who records this says that such things rarely passed there.[192]

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[176] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 6, 9, 11, 14 March 1671-2.

[177] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 2 July 1676.

[178] King James's " Memoirs," in J. S. Clarke, *Life of James the Second* (London, 1816), i. 518.

[179] Add. MS. 28040, 18 February 1671-2.

[180] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 8 August 1672.

[181] *Ibid.,* clxxix, 18 November 1677.

[182] *The Fatal Consequences of the Want of System in the Conduct of Public Affairs* (London, 1757), p. 35.

[183] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 10 April 1670.

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[184] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 9 January 1675-6. The reading given in *Calendar S. P. Dom., 1675-1676,* p. 504 differs a little from the above. I am indebted to the editors on other occasions for assistance in deciphering difficult writing in the state papers.

[185] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 12 February 1675-6.

[186] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxix, 20 February 1675-6.

[187] S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxvi, 6 August 1676.

[188] *Ibid.,* cccxc, 17 January 1676-7.

[189] *H. M. C.,* 4th report, appendix, pp. 231, 232.

[190] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxix, 3 August 1677.

From time to time the committee dealt with matters that pertained to Ireland, Scotland, the outlying islands, or the plantations. In 1669 on a Sunday in August " was a meeting of the Foreigne Committee in the Trear̄y where tis s$^{d}$ all things und$^{r}$ consideration relateing to Ireland were determined." [193] In a foreign committee at Essex House in November there was lengthy discussion of Scottish matters.[194] In 1677 the earl of Danby wrote to the duke of Lauderdale that he had received his letter and showed it to the king, " who imediately calld a Comittee of Forreigne affaires upon the contents of itt, & has ordered that a letter bee writt to my L$^{d}$ Granard to comand him to send one to y$^{r}$ Grace to confer w$^{th}$ you about all the matters necessary to be considered both in Scotland & Ireland, in order to the suppressing of any rising in Scotland." [195] In July 1678 a meeting of the foreign committee dealt almost entirely with conditions in Guernsey.[196] At a committee in January 1679 Irish matters were discussed.[197]

" Att the Foreigne Comittee " in September 1670 was read a memorial from the French ambassador; whereupon it was decided that letters should be written to the plantations concerning the recent edict of the French king prohibiting foreign ships from coming to the French colonies.[198] Two years later in foreign committee the king granted the petition of Newfoundland fishermen to sail despite a recent prohibition.[199] At another meeting of the committee in 1677 it was ordered that various lords should assemble twice a week to study the governments in the several plantations.[200]

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[191] Secretary Coventry to the bishop of Bath and Wells, 19 November 1677: Add. MS. 25124, fo. 130.

[192] Sir Robert Southwell to the duke of Ormonde, 22 October 1678: *H.M.C., Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 461.

[193] Sir Joseph Williamson's Journal, 16 August 1669: S.P.D., Charles II, cclxxi.

[194] S.P.F.E.B.M., clxxvi, 13 November 1669.

[195] Letter of 15 November 1677: *Lauderdale Papers*, iii (Camden Society, new series, xxxviii), p. 91.

[196] Sir Joseph Williamson to the governor of Guernsey, 30 July 1678: S.P.D., Entry Books, xliii. 211.

[197] Arlington to Ormonde, 6 January 1678-9: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 296.

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[198] S. P. D., Charles II, cclxxviii, 10 September 1670.

[199] *Ibid.,* cccii, 4 February 1671-2.

[200] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxix, 9 September 1677.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE COMMITTEE OF INTELLIGENCE

During the seventeenth century the committee of the privy council for foreign affairs gradually engrossed the power and the principal work of the council, not only diplomacy and foreign matters but important governmental business of all kinds. This was particularly true of the foreign committee established in 1668. For some years afterward there was within or alongside the privy council a smaller body of its principal members who while formally a subordinate committee constituted in effect a smaller and superior council themselves, acting much as the privy council in Elizabeth's time and—save for giving of necessary formal sanction—largely superseding the body from which its members derived their own standing.

In the period from 1668 to 1679 such a situation was often resented. As opponents of Charles I had denounced cabinet or interior councils a generation before, so was this group lamented by friends of Charles II and condemned by his foes. The king, said Clarendon, in exile, writing of the privy council, "rather esteemed some particular members of it, than was inclined to believe that the body of it ought to receive a reverence from the people, or be looked upon as a vital part of the government: in which his majesty (as hath been often said before) by the ill principles he had received in France, and the accustomed liberty of his bedchamber, was exceedingly and unhappily mistaken."[1] In May 1678 during a debate in the commons one member asserted that Charles was following "the Advice of private Ministers & not Ours . . . Some advise the King to stand alone without his People." Another declared it was "a Cabinet th$^{t}$ has brought Us into Thornes." [2] During the last months of 1678, in the fury aroused by the alleged Popish Plot, there were many attacks and many threats directed at the "cabinet council".

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[1] *Life and Continuation*, ii. 296, 297.

When in that crisis Charles II endeavored to appease opposition and gain time by reforming his privy council he offered also to do away with the foreign committee. In the declaration respecting the council, 21 April 1679, he said that as a result of the reform undertaken he hoped for wise and steady counsels in the future. "To this End Hee hath resolved to lay aside the use he may have hitherto made of any single Ministry, or private Advices, or forreigne Com̄ittees for the Generall Direction of His Affaires." [3] This, he declared, was because they had aroused so much dislike in previous years.

It may be that governmental procedure and practice of the era preceding made it seem necessary to continue the previous organization none the less. It may be that Charles intended no more than formal surrender to pacify opponents, resolving that no real alteration should be made. At all events, he proceeded immediately to constitute what was virtually a foreign committee of the old sort with another name. On the next day, at the first meeting of the council newly appointed, Charles established four standing committees. He ordered

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord chancellor | Lord Finch |
| lord president | earl of Shaftesbury |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Arlington |
| commander-in-chief | duke of Monmouth |
| secretary of state | earl of Sunderland |

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[2] S. P. D., Charles II, cccciii, 7 May 1678.

[3] P. C. R., lxviii, 21 April 1679.

| | |
|---|---|
| first lord of the treasury | earl of Essex |
| lord of the committee of trade and plantations | Viscount Halifax |
| secretary of state | Henry Coventry |
| Sir William Temple | |

"Or any three of them (a Secretary of State being alwayes one) to be a Comittee for Intelligence, for the opening, & considering all Advices, as well forreigne, as Domestique, And to meete where, & as often, as they shall see fit. &cª."[4] Even the new title involved only slight concession to those who had disliked the previous foreign committee, since "intelligence" had long been used in the particular sense of news from abroad or foreign correspondence.[5] The significance of the new body was well enough understood at once. On the day when the committee was appointed Sir Robert Southwell wrote of the committee "of Intelligence, which will be for secret affairs".[6]

At first the committee of intelligence contained nine members besides Prince Rupert—whose membership as a prince of the blood was assumed. Political conditions caused changes shortly to be made, some members being dropped and a larger number added. In October Shaftesbury's name was struck from the list, the earl of Radnor being appointed lord president in his place later on.[7] Lord Roberts, afterwards earl of Radnor, seems to have attended from the start, while Hyde became first commissioner of the treasury in November, and Sir Leoline

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[4] P.C.R., lxviii, 22 April 1679.

[5] "Tho' it be Presumption for an ordinary Street-walker to send Foreign News to a great Counsellor, yet I will adventure upon my Intelligence from an honest Man and great Servant of your Lordship's on the other Side." Lord Haughton to Viscount Wentworth, 30 July 1630: *Strafford Letters* (London, 1739), i. 52.

[6] Letter to the duke of Ormonde, 22 April 1679: *H.M.C., Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 504.

[7] P.C.R., lxviii, 15 October 1679.

Jenkins—appointed secretary of state in place of Coventry—and Sidney Godolphin entered in February 1680. By that time the committee appears to have contained altogether—including Prince Rupert—twelve members:[8]

| | |
|---|---|
| Prince Rupert | |
| lord chancellor | Heneage Finch |
| lord president | earl of Radnor |
| commander-in-chief | duke of Monmouth |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Arlington |
| secretary of state | earl of Sunderland |
| first lord of the treasury | Laurence Hyde |
| secretary of state | Henry Coventry |
| lord of the committee of trade and plantations | Viscount Halifax |
| Sir William Temple | |
| secretary of state | Sir Leoline Jenkins |
| commissioner of the treasury | Sidney Godolphin |

Attendance was much as at previous similar committees. During 1679 and 1680 the king was almost always present at the meetings. Usually Prince Rupert failed to come. The attendance of the others varied. In May 1679 there was a meeting of seven, and a few days later another of the king and seven. In June a committee of intelligence was attended by the king and ten. A week later there was another of the king and eight. A little later still Charles presided over a committee attended by nine members. In August there was a session of five, and another of eight a few days later. In September the king was present at a committee of seven. In March 1680 eleven assembled in presence of the king. In April there were meetings attended by ten, nine, eight, and ten, all with the king. In October there were four committees of ten, one of eleven, and one of nine—besides the king who was present at all of them. In November there were two of ten, two of eight, and one of nine, with the king at each one. In January 1681 there were one meeting of ten and three of nine, all attended by Charles.[9] When the king was present, he was, of course, the real presiding officer, as he was in council, giving his directions, and sometimes deciding matters himself.[10] According to the original instructions, a secretary of state must be present at a meeting of the committee of intelligence, and it was stated that at least three of the important members should attend.[11] In June 1680 one of the secretaries informed the lord chancellor, the lord president, and the earl of Essex respectively that the king having caused the committee of intelligence to be summoned to meet the day before at Windsor, "was pleased in regard to your Lop, & some other of my Lds were not present, to putt off the Sitting of that Committee till tomorrow at 10. aclock in the morning. His Ma^tie^ therefore hath Commanded me to acquaint your Ldp, th^t^ He desires you would be present & assisting at the Com^ee^ at Windsor tomorrow, being Tuesday the 8^th^ curr^t^ at 10. a clock, the buisnes th^t^ His Ma^tie^ intenes to advise upon with that Com^ee^ being of Great Importance." [12]

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[8] Register of the Committee of Intelligence: Add. MS. 15643, fo. 1.

Meetings of the committee of intelligence were held very generally at Whitehall in the council chamber.[13]

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[9] Add. MS. 15643, fos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 31, 32, 33, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49.

[10] *Ibid.,* fo. 18.

[11] P. C. R., lxviii, 22 April 1679.

[12] S. P. D. E. B., lxii, 7 June 1680.

[13] "Att the Comittee of Intelligence att the Councill Chamber Whitehall": Add. MS. 15643, fo. 12.

Less frequently they were at other places, as Hampton Court or Windsor.[14]

Meetings took place with fair regularity once or more a week. In April 1680 there were two meetings the first week, no more for a fortnight, then two in the two weeks succeeding. In May there was one meeting; in June there were four; in August three; in October six; in December five.[15] Apparently the several meetings were often not adjourned to a fixed time, but were specially summoned when desired.

From the establishment of the committee of intelligence a regular register of minutes was maintained in a volume used solely for that purpose,[16] as was the case with the privy council, and as had sometimes been the case with the foreign committee after 1668. During 1679 and the two years following it would seem that this register was regularly kept and with care. Then the record diminishes, and suddenly comes to an end. This may have been because the committee ceased to function—but that is not probable, though the name falls into disuse. More probably he who had been recording the minutes ceased to write them, for reasons not known now.

At meetings of the committee there were debates and discussions during business, to which the king listened, and often as not, deferred—though now as always he reserved his most secret affairs to himself or confided them only to a few of his most trusted servants outside any committee. At a meeting of the committee of intelligence in June 1679 Sir William Temple proposed that Holland be asked not to conclude a peace with Algiers apart from England: "A debate thereupon arising, the Lords Judged it not practicable." [17] Matters under consideration were sometimes referred to two or more of the members to consider or investigate, they to report to the committee.[18] Upon matters referred to the committee of intelligence by the privy council the committee itself made report.[19] In accordance with formal procedure, reports were made to the king in council, even though the king had been present at the committee when the matters were so arranged.[20]

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[14] *Ibid.,* fos. 13, 14.

[15] Add. MS. 15643, fos. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46.

[16] Add. MS. 15643.

[17] *Ibid.,* fo. 7.

The work done at the committee of intelligence, like that done formerly at the foreign committee, and like that done at meetings of the privy council, concerned a great many things. Memorials and petitions were dealt with, appointments were decided by the king, commissioners of the admiralty and members of the ordnance board were called in for consultation, matters concerning parliament and domestic affairs were taken up, as were other things relating to trade, the outlying dominions, Ireland, Tangier, and affairs of the Royal African Company. But there seems to have been less of this proportionately than there had been with the committee of foreign affairs, before Charles II reformed his privy council. The committee of intelligence was less of an interior council for all important matters than its predecessor had been. It was, despite its new name, more particularly a committee of foreign affairs. The greater part of its business always had to do with consideration, preparation, and debating of treaties, with information about doings of other governments, with foreign relations in general.

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[18] Add. MS. 15643, fo. 27.

[19] "This annexed Report from the Committee of Intelligence being put into my hand to be read the last Council, I according to order delivered it to my Lord President, but His Majesty not being present, the reading it was deferred till the next Council day, being Wednesday, at which His Majesty's presence is expected." Francis Gwyn to the duke of Ormonde, London, 14 August 1680: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, v. 379.

[20] Add. MS. 15643, 18 June 1679.

In May 1679 the committee reported to the king in council on letters from the consul at Naples: he had been imprisoned by the viceroy, and would not be released without security of 20,000 crowns. The committee advised the king to inform the viceroy that even if the consul were guilty as charged the king reserved the right to punish him. Charles directed Secretary Coventry to prepare such a letter.[21] A little later instructions for the envoy extraordinary to Spain were read and approved in the committee of intelligence. And "it was agreed that an additionall instruction bee prepared to watch carefully all proceedings about the sale or exchange of Flanders, & that Mr Secry make a draught of such an Instruction against next meeting according to the debate." [22] A week later the committee resolved that Sir Joseph Williamson should be spoken to about the project of a treaty of commerce with Denmark, which he had in his hands, and be asked to send it to the committee.[23] At another meeting the king determined to recall one of his envoys.[24]

About the same time was considered the draft of a treaty between England and Holland to guarantee the last treaty between France and Spain. Those present agreed "that the King should bee desired to come to the Comittee to morrow to heare it read." [25] Next day, the king and eight members present, the project of the treaty of guaranty was read and approved. Sunderland, secretary of state, was to ascertain whether the Dutch ambassador was empowered to conclude such a treaty. The king was ready to sign it. The privy council met that day, but there is nothing about this in the register of the council. At the same meeting of the committee it was agreed to report to the king in council that the committee of trade and plantations should consider the project of a treaty between England and Sweden. Two days later this was done, and Charles gave the order in council.[26] A little later a memorial of the Swedish ambassador being read to the king in committee of intelligence, Charles refused to grant what was asked.[27]

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[21] P.C.R., lxviii, 21 May 1679.

[22] Add. MS. 15643, 1 June 1679.

[23] *Ibid.,* 8 June 1679.

[24] *Ibid.,* 15 June 1679.

[25] *Ibid.,* 17 June 1679.

On another occasion a committee of four considered a communication from the Dutch ambassador.[28] Some days later in a privy council held at Hampton Court Charles ordered that a commission be prepared at once in the usual form authorizing ten members, all of them of the committee of intelligence, to treat with the ambassador of the states general for settling all matters relating to trade and navigation in Africa and along its coasts between subjects of the United Provinces and his majesty's subjects.[29] In August a committee of intelligence attended by eight conferred with the Dutch ambassador about the treaty.[30]

In November, in a committee at which three were present, Charles listened to a memorial of the envoy from Holstein, desiring his interposition to induce the king of Denmark to ratify a treaty between Holstein and Denmark and allow Holstein to be included in a treaty between Denmark and Hamburg. "His ma$^{ty}$ did direct that the s$^{d}$ Envoyé should bee answered, that his ma$^{ty}$ having had no part in making the peace, cannot thinke it fitt to interpose in the execuc̄on of the same, & that as to the other point of his memoriall that the Treaty between King of denmarke & the Town of Hamburgh is already made." [31] At the same meeting, Charles declaring he intended his ambassador to return in a few days to the Hague, the lords agreed that no further instructions should be given him about the treaty of guaranty with the states, his majesty having already made all advances that could be expected, and that therefore Sidney should await what the states or the prince of Orange might propose in the matter.[32] Shortly after at a meeting of the king and a committee of six, Secretary Coventry desired to know what instruction he should send about a treaty with Algiers. The lords upon debate ordered him to study former treaties with Algiers, that he might thus make them better able to offer opinions to his majesty in the matter.[33]

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[26] Add. MS. 15643, 18 June 1679; P.C.R., lxviii, 18, 20 June 1679.
[27] Add. MS. 15643, 28 June 1679.
[28] *Ibid.,* 16 July 1679.
[29] P.C.R., lxviii, 24 July 1679.
[30] Add. MS. 15643, 7 August 1679.

In December 1679 in a committee attended by the king and seven, letters from Sidney in Holland were read about an alliance proposed between Holland and France. "His ma$^{ty}$ did direct the Ea: of Sunderland to goe to the dutch Amb$^{r}$ & expostulate with him concerning this matter, & that an expresse should bee sent to M$^{r}$ Sidney, to order him to acquaint them there, how ill his ma$^{ty}$ would resent it, if they should make an Allyance With that Crowne after having in effect refused to doe the same With his ma$^{ty}$" [34] At a committee in the following February "Lr̄es from m$^{r}$ Sidney . . . read, whereupon the Ea: of Sunderland acquainted the Com̄ittee, that the King had written to the King of denmarke, & Elect. of Brandenburgh, in order to the taking com̄on measures with them, for the securing the quiett of Europe." [35] Shortly after the king in a committee of seven considered the terms of a defensive treaty with Denmark.[36]

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[31] *Ibid.,* 15 November 1679.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.,* 23 November 1679.

[34] *Ibid.,* fos. 22, 23.

[35] *Ibid.,* 1 February 1679-80.

[36] *Ibid.,* 10 February 1679-80.

A little later still Charles and eight members discussed the terms of a proposed treaty with Brandenburg.[37]

In April 1680 the king in a committee of intelligence attended by nine declared he had for some time thought of sending the earl of Oxford to compliment the king of France on the marriage of the dauphin. He asked their counsel. The committee advised against this, since it might offend Spain and other powers. Of this there is nothing in the register of the privy council.[38] Some months later in a committee of intelligence sitting with the king, a memorial from the Spanish ambassador being read, that his master's subjects were molested for their religion contrary to treaty, answer was ordered that the treaties would be strictly observed. Again, the council register has nothing of the matter.[39] Somewhat later another complaint from the ambassador about this was read in the committee, and ordered to be read in council. It was done in privy council two days later.[40] At this same meeting of the committee among other matters, was read a memorial about a ship taken from the Dutch. Resolved that an order of council be given for immediate restitution. That day those who had attended the committee met as a privy council in the same place—the council chamber—and issued the order.[41] Whether in this case the members thought of themselves as theoretically a committee of the whole council and so turned themselves into a privy council, or whether these members of the committee of intelligence happened to be those who met to hold the privy council, must remain a conjecture.

At the committee of intelligence were settled also various matters that had to do with trade and the outlying possessions of the crown. In June 1679 Charles in a committee of eight at Whitehall ordered the committee of trade and plantations to investigate the Baltic trade.[42] That winter the committee of intelligence considered a report, which had been ordered, about an arrangement respecting Guinea. After some debate it was agreed to ask the Guinea Company whether or not it desired the treaty.[43] On another occasion the committee dealt with a petition from the African Company against interlopers. The lords would report in council recommending that the king try to stop the abuses.[44] At another time "A paper of severall grievances of the English merchants in Holland, brought in by Mr Sec. Jenkins, read, to bee referred to the Comittee of trade & plantacons." [45] A little later at a committee of intelligence attended by eight in the presence of the king in the council chamber was read a memorial about the ship *Charity* taken from the Dutch upon pretence of an old commission of reprisals: the committee determined that an order of council should issue to direct the commissioners of the admiralty to order immediate restitution of the ship, and this was done the same day.[46] In May 1679, on motion of the lord president, Charles in committee of intelligence declared that Lady Dunkelly and her son should be permitted to go into Ireland, any order to the contrary notwithstanding.[47] That winter letters from Ireland were read in the committee and ordered sent to the house of lords.[48] During this time there was a committee of the privy council for Tangier, but various matters having to do with that possession of the crown were first dealt with in the committee of intelligence. In June 1679 a matter of recruits for the garrison in the Moroccan fortress was referred to the "Com̄ittee of Tanger".[49] At the beginning of the next year the king in a committee of intelligence at Whitehall directed that soldiers be ordered there.[50] On another occasion drafts of letters to officials at Tangier were read and approved.[51] Sometimes also plantation business was brought before the committee.[52]

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[37] Add. MS. 15643, 22 February 1679-80.

[38] *Ibid.*, 1 April 1680; P. C. R., lxvii, 31 March, 2 April 1680.

[39] Add. MS. 15643, 26 October 1680; P. C. R., lxix, 24, 27 October 1680.

[40] Add. MS. 15643, 30 January 1680-1; P. C. R., lxix, 2 February 1680-1.

[41] Add. MS. 15643, 30 January 1680-1; P. C. R., lxix, 30 January 1680-1.

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[42] Add. M. 15643, 8 June 1679.

[43] *Ibid.*, 8 December 1679.

[44] *Ibid.*, 6 March 1679-80.

[45] *Ibid.*, 2 January 1680-1.

[46] Add. MS. 15643, 30 January 1680-1; P. C. R., lxix, 30 January 1680-1.

[47] Add. MS. 15643, 25 May 1679.

[48] *Ibid.*, 5 December 1680.

The committee of intelligence dealt with various domestic matters. The most important of them had to do with parliament. During this disturbed period Charles brought before the committee important questions concerning what policy he should pursue with respect to the houses. Actually, however, this was for the most part no more than a matter of form, since almost invariably the king decided as he himself chose or as he had previously resolved with more confidential advisers elsewhere. In June 1679 "His Ma$^{ty}$ brought a Copy of a petic̄on (which he is informed is in hand) of severall Noblemen, & others inhabitants in & about London for calling the parliament, stopping the forces against the rebells in Scotland &c, which being read, a debate thereupon arose, but nothing was resolved." [53] Parliament had been prorogued to August 14. In the privy council there was nothing about this for some weeks when the king in council ordered to be prepared a proclamation dissolving parliament, at the same time announcing his intention of summoning a new one in October.[54] In April of the next year Charles informed the committee that the Dutch ambassador had desired him that the prorogation of parliament might not be so long as until the following November, and "that therefore he resolved the prorogac̄on should be till the 15th or 17th of may."[55] In December in a committee of intelligence attended by nine with the king the royal speech to be made to both houses of parliament was settled.[56] Shortly after, an address from the commons in answer to the king's late speech was read: "The King will consider in Councill, whether any answer, & what answer is fitt to be made to it, & the Councill to meet upon munday morning at 9 a clock."[57] At the same meeting, an "Addresse from the house in behalfe of Benjamin Harris, read, The King did not declare his pleasure upon it."[58] In the brief minutes of the council of the following Monday there is nothing about this.[59] Next month the petition of several lords for the parliament not to meet at Oxford being read before the king in committee of intelligence there was a debate about publishing a declaration concerning the recent dissolution, but nothing was agreed.[60] According to a contemporary, on one occasion the king appointed the committee of intelligence to give him an account of what was done in the commons; "before, he heard nothing but lies."[61]

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[49] Add. MS. 15643, 29 June 1679.

[50] *Ibid.*, 9 January 1679-80.

[51] *Ibid.*, 5 December 1680.

[52] *Ibid.*, 4 January 1679-80.

[53] *Ibid.*, 21 June 1679.

[54] P. C. R., 20, 23 June, 10 July 1679.

Many other things that had to do with departmental activities and various local or personal matters came before the committee. At a meeting of the king and seven in May 1679 appointments were made in the royal establishment.[62] About the same time in a committee of ten with the king a report from the committee of examinations about two Roman Catholics was read.[63] On several occasions matters relating to the safety of the Tower or the custody of prisoners there and other things having to do with conspiracies and plots were considered.[64] In December 1679 a suspect Frenchman was examined and committed to prison, report thereof to be made to the privy council.[65] The following June the commissioners of the admiralty were called in before the committee of intelligence, and instructions to Vice-admiral Herbert discussed.[66] On another occasion an address from the lieutenancy of London was read in the committee, then referred to the attorney general.[67]

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[55] Add. MS. 15643, 4 April 1680.

[56] *Ibid.*, 14 December 1680.

[57] *Ibid.*, 25 December 1680.

[58] *Ibid.*, 25 December 1680.

[59] P. C. R., lxix, 27 December 1680.

[60] Add. MS. 15643, 25 January 1680-1. A declaration of the king's reasons for dissolving the last two parliaments was ordered ten weeks later: P. C. R., lxix, 8 April 1681.

[61] Henry Sidney, *Diary and Correspondence of the Times of Charles the Second* (London, 1843), ii. 119.

[62] Add. MS. 15643, 25 May 1679.

It is evident, then, that the committee of intelligence, appointed when the privy council was reconstituted and reformed in 1679, was much like the committee of foreign affairs which had engrossed the main work and the importance of the council before the changes were made. The new committee was designed especially to deal with foreign affairs, but it was occupied also with such other matters, great or small, as king or principal ministers wished to consider. Like the committee of foreign affairs, though to lesser extent, it was really a smaller and more powerful central council.

That the committee of intelligence, in the years when its activities are formally recorded, had less greatness than the foreign committee of the years preceding had possessed, was probably owing for the most part to political circumstances in the critical period when differences between king and opposition came finally to issue.

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[63] Add. MS. 15643 1 June 1679.

[64] *Ibid.*, 3, 27 August, 18 September, 19, 26 October, 4, 10, 17 November 1679.

[65] *Ibid.*, 1 December 1679.

[66] *Ibid.*, 23 June 1680.

[67] *Ibid.*, 14 December 1680.

During some time the committee of intelligence was attended by Shaftesbury and others strongly opposed to Charles, who had entered the council and the committee because they expected to control them. Hence the committee of intelligence was less trusted than the foreign committee before 1679. For a while the king reserved his most important matters to himself, as James I had done long before. Presently he gave confidence and most intimate concerns to a small group whom he trusted most—as James I also had done. In so far as this smaller group was called " cabinet " by outsiders—as sometimes may have been done, the cabinet at this time is not to be identified with the foreign committee as had generally been the case before. After the crisis of these years had passed and Charles was completely triumphant, the committee of intelligence drops from sight.

There is reason to believe, however, as will be shown, that as the committee of intelligence was merely the great central committee of the privy council, for foreign affairs and other matters of importance, constituted when Charles to placate his enemies abandoned the old body because of opprobrium attached to the names " cabinet " and " committee of foreign affairs ", so when the exigency passed not only were the limitations imposed on the privy council allowed to fall into neglect, but the committee of foreign affairs, otherwise " the committee " or cabinet once more appeared. This was not done obtrusively. So far as the records show no new foreign committee was ever appointed. It would seem that the committee of intelligence was known again as the committee of foreign affairs during 1681, and that new members were appointed to this body and old ones dropped from it, while it was more and more referred to merely as " the committee " or else as the cabinet council.

In August 1679 Barillon had a long audience with the king in the apartment of the duchess of Portsmouth.

Charles asked for four million livres from the king of France. Needless to say the committee of intelligence had no part in this. Barillon thought the duchess alone seemed to know about it, though he did not doubt that Sunderland was in the affair.[68] A little later Barillon advised a gratification for the duchess of Portsmouth and another for Lord Sunderland.[69] After a while the ambassador had conferences respecting the matter not only with the duchess and Sunderland, but also with Hyde and the duke of York.[70] A year later he reported that the duchess and Sunderland hoped to lead the king to follow their advice, but that Charles also took counsel of Halifax, Seymour, and Hyde, who had different views.[71] In February 1681, however, he wrote to the king of France that Charles was in a strange extremity, for he dared not rely upon any of those about him: "if he makes a treaty with your majesty, I do not know whether any of his ministers will have knowledge of it." [72] In May he wrote that Hyde alone was in the secret of the negotiations.[73]

A few months after the establishment of the privy council of 1679 the register shows that the more important leaders, now some, now others, were apt to be away from meetings, especially the smaller meetings.[74] Probably conflict of opposing groups was such that some members cared not to attend except at the larger, more formal meetings of the council. It may be that within the committee of intelligence opposition was even greater. For some important business an inner circle was soon developed apart from the committee of intelligence. Sir William Temple relates that Sunderland and he began working together in perfect confidence. After a fortnight Sunderland suggested addition of the earl of Essex. " So we met, for a while, once a day by turns, at each of our houses, and consulted upon the chief affairs that were then on the anvil, and how they might be best prepared for the Parliament or the Council ". Then Temple proposed the inclusion of Halifax, and that was done.[75]. He says that Sunderland, Essex, Halifax, and himself easily agreed upon the measures that seemed necessary for satisfaction of the Dutch Netherlands and the safety of Flanders. These various meetings were not of the committee of intelligence, to which Temple merely alludes, though he states specifically that all four persons were " of the committee, where all the foreign affairs were consulted ".[76] Then they took the duke of Monmouth and the earl of Shaftesbury into the first digestion of this treaty with Holland at a meeting for that purpose at Halifax's house. Some of these meetings were evidently what were later on known as " private meetings " of ministers. Doubtless some were in the presence of Charles II, though of them no record now remains. By some at this time the term " cabinet " may have been applied to such meetings. Roger North declares that his brother,

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[68] Barillon to Louis XIV, London, 3 August 1679 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxliii, 297, 299.

[69] Letter from Winsdor, 21 September 1679 (N. S.): *ibid.*, fo. 320.

[70] Letters of 2, 5, 9 October 1679 (N. S.): *ibid.*, fos. 325, 331, 333, 337, 338, 339.

[71] Barillon to Louis XIV, London, 19 December 1680 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxlvii. 422a. The next week he wrote: "Ceux qui paroissent avoir la confiance de sa Majesté Britannique sont tousjours M.$^{rs}$ Heyde, Seymer, et Halifax": letter of 26 December 1680 (N. S.): *ibid.*, cxlvii. 428. Shortly after he declared that Halifax was superior to the others: *ibid.*, fo. 435. Again: "Milord Halifax . . . paroist avoir plus de part qu'aucun autre dans le confiance de sa Majesté Britanique. M.$^{r}$ Heyde et M.$^{r}$ Seymer sont aussi appelés et consultés". Letter of 30 January 1681 (N. S.): *ibid.*, cxlviii. 31.

[72] Barillon to Louis XIV, London, 13 February 1681 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxlviii. 50.

[73] Letter of 12 May 1681 (N. S.):' *ibid.*, cxlix. 127.

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[74] P. C. R., lxviii.

[75] Temple, *Memoirs, Works,* ii. 513, 514.

[76] *Ibid.,* p. 515.

Baron Guilford, never attended the foreign committee.[77] The lord keeper, however, writing his own reminiscences of this period says: [78]

> It was Not long before he was summoned to the Cabinett. ffor the K. found his losses by this New Modell, & turned some out, & gave others leav to withdraw upon their declining his service becaus their advice was Not taken when the ld ch. Just. N. was so farr from following his comp$^{a}$, that he was taken in to the Most secret recesses of the K Counsells

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[77] Original draft of the Life of the Hon. Francis North, Lord Keeper Guilford: Add. MS. 32507, fo. 164; *Lives of the Norths,* i. 328, 329.

[78] Lord Keeper Guilford, "Memoranda Historica": Add. MS. 32520, fo. 251; *Lives of the Norths,* i. 309, 321.

# CHAPTER V

## THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AFTER 1679

THE committee of foreign affairs or cabinet had been abolished formally by Charles II when he reconstituted his privy council in April 1679 to pacify political opposition when that opposition seemed dangerous to him. It is probable enough that the king made this change with reluctance. The course of administrative development for half a century had been more and more in the direction of displacing the privy council in actual conduct of important council business by a smaller group of council members, and it had come almost to be a matter of course that this body should be the committee or part of the council which nominally assisted the king in management of his foreign affairs, but which actually devoted itself as the king and its members might desire to managing any important business whatsoever. In the scheme that Sir William Temple says he propounded restoration of governmental control to the whole body of the privy council was proposed, as had been the case when Elizabeth ruled. Development of political parties and of organized opposition in parliament, desire to include these several interests within one privy council, multiplication of government business, and increasing difficulty of getting much done in any large council, doomed the new scheme to failure. Probably practical politicians little expected that it would succeed. Shaftesbury and his colleagues seem to have been willing to take part in the project because at first they believed they would thus be able to control government and coerce the king. Within a week after the new privy council was proclaimed Barillon wrote to the king of France that he understood it was the design of Shaftesbury, Halifax and others who had recently entered the council to suggest to Charles measures that would annihilate his authority and remove all officials suspected by the nation, that if their demands were not granted they would at once retire.[1] Charles probably had no intention of keeping to the new arrangement when necessity had passed.[2] At all events, the king after proclaiming that he would not in future have a committee of foreign affairs at once appointed a standing committee of the council to deal with foreign matters and other important business before it came to the council. The new group had less power than the foreign committee before it had held, doubtless owing to political embarrassments and intrigues of the moment. It was to be called the committee of intelligence, but such concession could deceive no one for the new appellation was easily recognized as a variant designation for foreign committee. Before the changes were announced Sir Robert Southwell, experienced in council practice and very well informed as to news, wrote that "a select Committee as well for the foreign as home affairs of the greatest importance shall hereafter sit in the Council chamber." [3]

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[1] "Si cela n'est accordé leur dessein est de declarer qu'ils se retirent du conseil et qu'ils ne puissent y servir. Leur retraite peut produire une entiere confusion, et jetter les affaires dans une extremité sans remede." Letter of 8 May 1679 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxlii. 233.

[2] Such was the opinion of an eighteenth-century commentator: "It is probable that it was not the King's Intention to carry the said Orders and Regulations into Execution . . . and that this Alteration was made at the Council-Board to quiet the Minds of the Subjects, and to silence the Opposition which had been given in Parliament to foreign Committees." *The Fatal Consequences of the Want of System in the Conduct of Public Affairs* (London, 1757), p. 50.

[3] Letter to the duke of Ormonde, 19 April 1679: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 504.

A little later the Dutch ambassador described the new group specifically as a committee for foreign affairs.[4]

The name committee of intelligence continued to be used for about two years, and during much of that time formal record of such a body was kept. In less than a year after it was established, however, the term committee of foreign affairs or foreign committee came again into use. In many instances it is clear that these designations were applied to what was also known as the committee of intelligence. Presently that committee seemed to disappear. Actually it was being known solely as the foreign committee again.

In April 1680 Secretary Coventry wrote concerning a letter: "I have shewed it his Majesty, and the Committee of fforreign affairs." [5] On the same day the French ambassador, who so far had not mentioned any "committee of intelligence", wrote that the business of sending the earl of Oxford to France to compliment Louis on the marriage of the dauphin had been before the committee for foreign affairs.[6] Minutes of the committee of intelligence show that this business had been before it a few days earlier.[7] Shortly after one of Ormond's correspondents said that following a privy council "a committee of foreign affairs" assembled to which came

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[4] "In't verdeelen van de commissien is die van de uytheemsche saecken gevallen op den Heer President, de Heer Cancelier, de twee Heeren Secretarissen van staet (welcke vien in alle commissien sijn) ende daernevens op de Heer Hertogh van Monmouth, de Heer Grave van Arlington, de Heer Grave van Essex, de Heer Vicomte Hallifax ende de Heer William Temple, welcke alle in dese tijt bekent sijn vor Heeren van goede maximen in't geen de gemeene interessen met de staet betreft." Van Beuningen to the states general, Westminster, 5 May 1679 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 EE, fo. 111.

[5] Letter to Mr. Parry, 5 April 1680: Add. MS. 25120, fo. 40.

[6] "Cependant des que la cour a esté icy l'affaire a esté changée dans le comité pour les affaires estrangeres." Barillon to the king of France, London, 15 April 1680 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxlv. 130.

[7] Add. MS. 15643, 1 April 1680.

Lord Chandos to acknowledge his error in signing a petition for the sitting of parliament and to beg his majesty's pardon.[8] In May Secretary Jenkins asserted that the earl of Sunderland, the other secretary, had put two letters into his hands: "I shall not fayle to produce them att the next forrein Committee".[9] That day he wrote to another that on the preceding Wednesday he had shown certain letters to the king "att the Committee of Intelligence".[10] The same day to another he says that last Wednesday he produced a letter before the king "at the forreign Com$^{ee}$".[11] Writing to the same correspondent four days later, he says he has no further directions to give in respect of an inquiry about Hamburg: "I must desire your Respite till the Committee of forrein Affaires do meet".[12] Then three days later he tells him that his letter to Lord Sunderland has been read "att the Com$^{ee}$ of Intelligence".[13] Early in June he wrote that a committee of intelligence had been summoned to meet the day before at Windsor, but that because of the absence of certain ones—the lord chancellor, the lord president, and the earl of Essex—the king had postponed the meeting until two days afterward, to be at Windsor, the business of great importance.[14] The records of the committee of intelligence show that a meeting of that body was held next day, an alliance with Spain being considered.[15] On that day the secretary wrote that one of his letters was brought before a committee of intelligence at Windsor.[16] The same day the Dutch representative wrote back that a meeting of the committee of foreign affairs had been assembled at Windsor.[17]

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[8] Francis Gwyn to the duke of Ormonde, London, 27 April 1680: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, v. 311.

[9] Sir Leoline Jenkins to Mr. Skelton, Whitehall, 14 May 1680: S. P. D. E. B., lxiv. 2.

[10] Jenkins to Sir Gabriel Sylvius, 14 May 1680: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxviii.

[11] Jenkins to Mr. Sydney, 14 May 1860: *ibid.*, lxviii.

[12] Jenkins to Sylvius, 18 May 1680. *ibid.*, clxxxviii.

[13] Letter of 21 May 1680: *ibid.*

[14] Jenkins to the lord chancellor, the lord president, the earl of Essex, 7 June 1680: S. P. D. E. B., lxii.

[15] Add. MS. 15643, fo. 34.

The terms continue for a while to be used indiscriminately or alternately. In August Sunderland wrote to the lord president that the king wished the committee of intelligence to attend him at Windsor the next afternoon, upon business of importance, his lordship not to fail to be present.[18] Such a meeting is noted in the register of the committee of intelligence the next day.[19] Towards the end of the month Sunderland wrote to a certain one that his letters had been read " at the Committee of forrain Intelligence ".[20] At the beginning of the next year he tells him in two successive letters of meetings of the committee of intelligence.[21] Meanwhile Jenkins, the other secretary of state, had written to another that various letters of his had been read on the Sunday previous " before his Ma^tie^ at the Committee of forrein affaires ".[22] The reading of one of these letters is mentioned in the minutes of a meeting of the committee of intelligence on the day in question.[23] A little later he again writes to the same person that two of his letters were read the last Sunday before the king at " a Com^ee^ of forrein affaires ".[24] On that Sunday this person's letters were read at a committee of intelligence.[25] In February Jenkins wrote to one correspondent that letters of his had been read the day before, Sunday, " at the Committee of Intelligence ", the king being present.[26] On the same day he wrote to another that yesterday two of his letters had been read " at the Com̄ittee of forrein Affaires ".[27]

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[16] Letter of 8 June 1680: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxviii.

[17] " Heeft den Coningh op huyden, de commissarissen van zynen raed tot de Uitlandsche zaechen hier byeengeroepen." Van Leeuwen to the greffier of the states general, Windsor, 8 June 1680 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 SSS, fo. 319.

[18] Letter of 7 August 1680: S. P. D. E. B., lvi. 43.

[19] Add. MS. 15643, fo. 36.

[20] Letter to Sir Henry Goodricke, Windsor, 30 August 1680: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxvii. 40.

[21] Letters of 3, 17 January 1680-1: *ibid.*, fos. 91, 92.

[22] Letter to [Philip] Warwick, 30 November 1680: S. P. D. E. B., lxviii. 425.

[23] Add. MS. 15643, 28 November 1680.

The register itself of the committee of intelligence records meetings of a committee with that name until the first part of 1681, but after that time, when its record comes to an end, allusions are almost invariably to the foreign committee, with only very occasional mention of a committee of intelligence. In April 1681 Jenkins wrote that a matter concerning Tangier had been before " the Committee of forain Affaires ".[28] In June he wrote to the earl of Carlisle that " His Ma$^{ty}$ having the present State of Jamaica before him on Sunday last, at a Com̄ittee of forrein affaires, com̄anded me to let yo$^{r}$ Lōp. know, that He finds the presence of a Governour upon the place to be necessary for His Service ".[29] These and other instances make it evident that the foreign committee of this time, as had been the case previously, was not limited to consideration merely of foreign and diplomatic matters. In July a correspondent wrote that Lord Ranelagh's accounts and the balance thereupon due had that day been considered by the committee for foreign affairs, they meeting in the treasury chamber.[30] A little later

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[24] Letter of 4 January 1680-1: S. P. D. E. B., lxviii. 423.

[25] Add. MS. 15643, 2 January 1680-1.

[26] Letter to Mr. Fanshaw, Whitehall, 28 February 1680-1: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[27] Letter to Mr. Savile, Whitehall, 28 February 1680-1. *ibid.*

[28] Letter to Colonel Sackville, 25 April 1681: *ibid.*

[29] Letter of 14 June 1681: S. P. D. E. B., lxii. 186.

[30] Richard Mulys to———, 16 July 1681: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series. vi. 102.

Secretary Jenkins wrote to the vice-chamberlain that his two last letters had that day been communicated to the king at a committee of foreign affairs.[31] From another letter it would seem that on the day before, Sunday, there had also been a committee of foreign affairs at Windsor.[32] In August Secretary Conway wrote to the British resident in Sweden that the treaty of commerce, which had passed the committee of trade would be reviewed at the first committee of foreign affairs, before being sent to Sweden.[33] In November Jenkins wrote to Sir Richard Bulstrode concerning his communication about a message of the prince of Parma: "I must beg your Respit vpon it till after Sunday when at the Committee of forain Affaires it will be proper to treat of such Affaires".[34]

In January 1682 Jenkins writing on Sunday speaks of a committee of foreign affairs that had just risen.[35] Shortly after he wrote to the lord chancellor and to the lord president:[36]

> His Ma$^{ty}$ desires very much to speak with Yo$^{r}$ Lōp to morrow, therefore hath Com̄anded me to adde to the Summons you'll have for the Com̄ittee of forrain affaires which is to meet at foure a clock, his ma$^{ty's}$ desire to speak with yo$^{r}$ Lōp about some business of importance after the Com̄ittee is up.

Somewhat later he declared that he had laid a paper before the king "and my Lords of the Committee of fforreign affaires", and that they desired the admiralty board to look into the matter.[37]

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[31] Letter of 18 July 1681: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[32] Jenkins to Goodricke, 18 July 1681: *ibid.*

[33] Letter of 23 August 1681: Add. MS. 35104, fo. 22.

[34] Letter of 11 November 1681: S. P. F. E. B., cxc.

[35] Letter to the vice-chamberlain, Whitehall, 8 January 1681-2: *ibid.*, clxxxix.

[36] Letters of 25 February 1681-2: S. P. D. E. B., lxviii. 35.

[37] Secretary Jenkins to Lord Finch, undated: S. P. D. E. B., lxiii. 36.

It would seem that by this time the foreign committee was meeting regularly and frequently. In May 1682 Jenkins wrote to Lord Preston, ambassador to France, that he had not yet had opportunity to bring some business to the king's attention, " because of the indisposition that took him yesterday before the hours of the Committee of Foreign Affairs." [38] In July he wrote to him again that letters of his had been read before the king at committees of foreign affairs.[39] In August he told him that other letters were to be produced the next Sunday at a meeting of the same committee.[40] In September he acknowledged a letter and accompanying information, " which hath been read before his Majesty at a Committee of Foreign Affairs." [41] A week later he wrote about a Sunday meeting of the foreign committee.[42] In October he read another of Lord Preston's letters to Charles at the committee of foreign affairs.[43]

That the body now designated as a committee of foreign affairs was well recognized as a committee of the privy council, though there is no record in the council register of any foreign committee being established after the committee of intelligence was instituted in 1679, is evident, if evidence be required, from a letter of Secretary Jenkins in 1683. He wrote to Lord Preston that he had two of his recent letters: " they haue been read to the King, seuerall of my Lords attending, tho not at a formall Committee of forrein affaires ".[44] Shortly after he wrote to Colonel Kirke that one of his letters had been read to the king " at the Com$^{ee}$ of forreign affaires ".[45] In April he said that another of Kirke's letters had been read before the king at the foreign committee, though matters affecting Tangier were seldom determined at " a Com̄ittee of forreigne affaires ", without first referring them to debate and consideration of the committee of Tangier, to be reported thence again to the king in council.[46] A little later he wrote that letters had come to him after he returned from Windsor, so that he could not hope to produce them before the king at the foreign committee until the next Sunday.[47] In May he wrote to another about bringing his letters to attention of the king at a committee of foreign affairs held at Windsor on Sunday.[48] To another he wrote about the same time: " I haue yo$^{rs}$ regularly, they are read before his Ma$^{tie}$ at the Com$^{ee}$ of forreigne affaires ".[49] In August the duke of Ormonde wrote in respect of certain papers: " I think I shall on Friday produce them at a Committee of Foreign Affairs that on Sunday the King's pleasure may be had ".[50] Shortly after Jenkins wrote to thank Lord Preston for a private letter sent him, that being the best way to communicate things not fit to trouble the foreign committee.[51] In October 1683 another of Lord Preston's correspondents mentions the reading of a letter at this committee.[52]

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[38] Letter of 29 May 1682. *Graham MSS.*, *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, pp. 352, 353; S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix. The previous day was Sunday.

[39] Letters of 24, 31 July 1682: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 355; S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[40] Letter of 24 August 1682: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 357.

[41] Secretary Jenkins to Lord Preston, Whitehall, 18 September 1682: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 357.

[42] Letter to Sir Henry Goodricke, envoy extraordinary to the king of Spain, 25 September 1682: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[43] Letter of 23 October 1682: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 359; S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

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[44] Letter of 4 January 1682-3: S.P.F.E.B., cxciii.

[45] Letter of 15 January 1682-3: *ibid.*

[46] Jenkins to Colonel Kirke, 9 April 1683: *ibid.*

[47] Jenkins to Sir R. Bulstrode, 30 April 1683: *ibid.*, cxc.

[48] Letter to Mr. Fanshaw, 21 May 1683: *ibid.*, cxciii.

[49] Letter to Mr. Tempest, 28 May 1683: *ibid.*

[50] Letter to the earl of Arran, 16 August 1683: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, vii. 106.

[51] Letter of 30 August 1683: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[52] O. Wynne to Lord Preston, Whitehall, 22 October 1683: *H.M.C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 367.

Shortly after Jenkins told Lord Dartmouth that the king had referred discussion of some of his letters to "the Committee of Forreign affaires", which sat the day before—Sunday—in the afternoon.[53] It was in this year that Charles II acquainted his brother "with his design of admitting him again into the Committee of forreigne affairs, and of consulting him in all other matters as well as what related to Scotland".[54] In January 1684, in consequence of the great frost Jenkins found himself with no letter from within his department to produce at a meeting of the foreign committee.[55] At another Sunday meeting in March Jenkins produced communications "before the Lords Com^tees^ of Forreign Affaires", who directed that they be sent to the treasury.[56]

After the time of Charles II the term committee of foreign affairs almost disappears, the body previously designated thus being generally known thenceforth as "the committee" or cabinet. From time to time, however the old term was used, and always it was understood by those well-informed that the important group who advised the crown and carried on administration made up the committee of foreign affairs. In November 1685 Ormonde wrote to Primate Boyle: "After I had written mine of the 5th inst. to your Grace, his Majesty called into an inner room such of his Council as usually attend him upon foreign affairs, and there were read to him and them the Lord Lieutenant's instructions".[57] A year later, he said that he had been at Windsor for some days, " but neither at the Committee of Foreign Affairs, or at an audience, I had from the King on Monday morning, did I hear the least mention of Ireland ".[58] In December 1689 a committee of the house of lords, examining certain ones with respect to events in the time of James II, reported about proceedings in connection with quo warrantos in 1687: " This Examinant saith, That he attended at the Committee of Council for Foreign Affairs; but he was at no Cabal; and the Franchises of *London* were destroyed before ever he attended any Cabal or Committee ".[59] In 1703 Godolphin, lord treasurer, wrote to Nottingham, secretary of state, that " the L$^{ds}$ of the cabinett councill, who are here " would attend the queen on the subject of the foreign letters that evening.[60] A few days later Secretary Hedges wrote to Nottingham that very few " of the com̄ittee " were in or about the town.[61] " Attended in Morn: Com$^{ee}$ of Council at the Secretary's, where the For$^{n}$ L$^{rs}$ read, and Answers directed, & Minutes taken by the Sec$^{ty}$, in order to write Answers accordingly ", Earl Cowper recorded in 1705.[62] In 1741, in a privy council of nineteen held in the presence of George II at St. James's, was read a memorial from the Portuguese minister to the duke of Newcastle, secretary of state, about exportation of provisions from England to Portugal. It was ordered by the king thereupon that the memorial should be referred " to the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Council for Foreign Affairs ", who were to consider it and report thereon to the king in council.[63] Such formality was by this time unusual and belated.

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[53] Letter of 12 November 1683: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[54] Clarke, *Life of James the Second*, i. 738.

[55] Jenkins to Preston, Whitehall, 21 January 1683-4: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 368.

[56] Letter to Mr. Fanshaw, 10 March 1683-4: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[57] Letter of 7 November 1685: *Ormonde, MSS.*, new series, vii. 388.

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[58] Letter to the earl of Clarendon, 16 September, 1686: *ibid.*, p. 457.

[59] *Lords' Journals*, xiv. 388.

[60] Letter of 25 August 1703: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 113.

[61] Letter of 2 September 1703: *ibid.*, fo. 129.

[62] *Diary of Earl Cowper* (Roxburghe Club, 1833), p. 4.

[63] P. C. R., xcvi, 23 April 1741.

In 1747 there was held in the council chamber at Whitehall, a meeting of the privy council or else of a committee of the council—the record does not make it clear—at which sixteen were present. The business is described as "Committee Minute relating to three Privateers Stopt in the Downs"; but farther on a certain matter was "Ordered in Council". This, of course, may be no more than a committee of the whole privy council turning itself into a council for formal completing of business decided. After the examination of various persons, "it was Agreed and accordingly Ordered to referr the further Examination of Commodore Acton to the following Lords of the Committee for Foreign Affairs"—the lord chancellor, the lord president, the duke of Bedford, the duke of Newcastle, the earls of Pembroke and Chesterfield, and Henry Pelham, all of them members of the cabinet council.[64] A year later Lord Chancellor Hardwicke spoke of the cabinet as being the committee of council for foreign affairs.[65]

These later allusions were exceptional, however. As the term "committee of foreign affairs" again superseded the term "committee of intelligence" after a short time, so within a few years following men seldom spoke of the foreign committee, but alluded to it as "the committee", or spoke of "the lords of the committee" who composed it.

In the closing years of the seventeenth century, and for some time thereafter "the committee" was the most striking body in the central government of England under the king. "The committee" was the center of conciliar and administrative work in the realm, and the term for a time was more frequently employed than "cabinet council ". For him who reads in the sources of the period some of the most baffling problems that concern development of cabinet and council arise in connection with " the committee ". No consideration of the history of the cabinet can be undertaken until all questions in respect of " the committee " are resolved. The nature of this body has been variously understood and explained. It is proposed to show that generally, if not always, " the committee "—when that term was employed in connection with principal ministers and in respect of important governmental work—was what men had called the committee of foreign affairs. And demonstration will be offered that generally the committee of foreign affairs, later on " the committee ", was what men called the cabinet council.

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[64] P. C. R., c, 6 March 1746-7.

[65] Letter to the duke of Newcastle, 1 November 1748: Add. MS. 32717, fo. 249.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE

IT WAS natural enough that those who used terms often should use them sometimes—more as time went on—with abbreviation, descriptive epithet omitted but well understood. Thus in the history of the privy council there are numerous instances of a particular committee of the council alluded to simply as "the committee" or "a committee of the council". Often then it is only from context or through additional or collateral information that one may decide to what committee allusion is made, and sometimes in lack of such information no conclusion can be drawn. Through much of the seventeenth century, however, the committee of the council for foreign affairs was the most important of all the divisions of the council, and examination of the sources makes it evident that to this body the term "the committee" was more and more attached, until by the end of the century such designation nearly superseded the fuller title that formerly had been applied.

In July 1635, shortly after Archbishop Laud became a member of the committee for foreign affairs, Elizabeth of Bohemia wrote to him: "I must make a dispatch to the King my deare Brother concerning the businesses of my sonnes in Germanie, I know the king will acquaint you and the other Lords of the committee with it".[1] In 1636, with respect to some communications of his from Germany, Secretary Windebank wrote to the earl marshal that the king was extremely well satisfied, "and so are all my Lords of the Committee", with his diligence and dexterity in this great service.[2] This refers undoubtedly to the foreign committee. Next year Laud thanked the English ambassador in Madrid for not writing until he had something to say of private concern. "For as for that which concerns your public service, I meet with that at the Committee".[3] A little later he told Viscount Conway: "That which your Lordship writes concerning State affairs I meet with at the Committee".[4] In 1640 he wrote that "The Committee" had been called to Oatlands, where he had no accommodation.[5] In this case one may not be entirely sure, but very probably Laud was referring to what was variously called the foreign committee, the Scottish committee, or the committee of state. Next day, Sir Francis Windebank, secretary of state, also writing to Conway from Oatlands, said: "The sickness being broken out at Hampton Court . . . we are in som disorder, & the King hath dissolued the Councell, only the LL$^{ds}$ of the Cōittee are commanded to attend."[6] Shortly after a letter of Charles I written from Huntingdon, directed that it be given to Secretary Windebank, who was then to communicate it to the queen and the lords of the committee.[7]

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[1] Letter of 2/12 July 1635: S. P. D., Charles I, ccxciii.

So it was a generation later. Clarendon several times speaks of "that committee" which Charles II trusted in his most secret affairs, when he is referring to what is elsewhere described as the foreign committee. In 1678 Sir Joseph Williamson wrote to Laurence Hyde, during negotiation of the Treaty of Nymwegen, that a declaration had been made by a foreign representative, another standing by, "to his Ma$^{ty}$, before his Royall Highness, Prince Rupert & all the other Lords of the Com̄ittee, at a solemn meeting". Writing of the next day, Sunday, he said: "This Evening his Ma$^{ty}$ has had the two Ministers with him at the foreign Com̄ittee".[8] In the register of the committee of intelligence minutes of the meetings are sometimes headed "Att the Com̄ittee att the Council chamber".[9] The members of the body are designated merely as "the Lords of the Committee".[10]

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[2] *Clarendon State Papers* (Oxford, 1767-86), i. 578.

[3] Letter to Lord Aston, Lambeth, 14 June 1637: *Works,* vii. 352.

[4] Letter of 27 October 1637: *ibid.,* p. 377.

[5] Letter to Viscount Conway, 2 August 1640: *ibid.,* p. 506.

[6] Letter of 3 August 1640: S. P. D., Charles I, cccclxiii. 12.

[7] S. P. D., Charles I, 24 August 1640: Public Record Office, Museum, Pedestal, No. 73.

In 1680 Sir Leoline Jenkins, secretary of state, writing letters to Sir Gabriel Sylvius, in respect of his various communications from abroad, mentions "the Committee of Intelligence", "the Committee of forrein Affaires", "the Com$^{ee}$ of Intelligence", "a Committee of Intelligence", "Comittee of Intelligence", "a Com$^{ee}$ of foreign affaires", "the Com$^{ee}$", "his Ma$^{tie}$ in Com$^{ee}$", "the Com$^{ee}$ of Intelligence", alluding almost certainly to the same body throughout.[11] That summer he wrote to another correspondent that at Windsor on Sunday letters had been read "att the Com$^{ee}$".[12] There is abundant evidence that at this time the committee of foreign affairs or committee of intelligence was being held very regularly on Sundays in presence of the king. A fortnight later he wrote that two letters had been produced "at the Com$^{ee}$" on Sunday.[13] In November he wrote to one who was envoy extraordinary to various electors and princes of Germany that two of his letters had been read before the king "att the Com$^{ee}$".[14] Later he told him that another of his letters had been read "att the Com:ee yesterday"—Sunday—whereupon the king had promised to do certain things.[15]

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[8] Letters from Whitehall, 21 April 1678: Western MS. 35375, fo. 297.

[9] Add. MS. 15643, fo. 13.

[10] *Ibid.*, fo. 22.

[11] Letters of 14, 18, 21 May, 8, 29 June, 6 July, 10, 24 August, 21 December 1680: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxviii.

[12] Letter to Mr. Sydney, 10 August 1680: S. P. F. E. B., lxviii.

[13] Letter to Sydney, 24 August 1680: *ibid.*

[14] Letter to Mr. Bertie, 22 November 1680. *ibid.*, cxciii.

In January 1681 Jenkins wrote to the earl of Middleton saying that his letters would be produced at "the next Committee".[16] The next month he told the envoy extraordinary to France that he would learn the king's pleasure in respect of a matter "at the Comee on sunday".[17] Shortly after he told him that three of his letters had been read the day before—Sunday—"at the Committie".[18] A week later that letters of his had been read "at the Com̄ittee of forrein Affaires".[19] Subsequently he informed him that although some of his letters had been read the day before—Sunday—"at the Committee", no order had been given upon them.[20] On another occasion about the same time he told another correspondent that a cipher account would be laid before the king "at the Com:ee", and later on that one of his letters needed "noe support at the Committee".[21] In April the secretary wrote to the envoy extraordinary to Spain that letters and papers sent by him had been considered "at the Committee".[22] At a Sunday meeting of the committee another of the envoy's letters was read somewhat later.[23] In July Jenkins wrote to him that there had just been a Sunday meeting of the committee of foreign affairs at Windsor.[24] About this time the secretary informed the vice-chamberlain that some of his letters had been read "at the Committee" on Sunday, his conduct with respect to Spanish business being perfectly approved.[25] A week later he told him that his two last letters had been communicated to the king "at a Committee of forain Affaires".[26] Allusions to communications from representatives abroad being read to the king "at the committee" in Sunday meetings, and less frequently at meetings of the committee held on other days, might be set forth almost indefinitely at this time.

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[15] Letter of 20 December 1680: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[16] Letter of 10 January 1680-1: S. P. D. E. B., lxiv. 56.

[17] Letter to Mr. Savile, 10 February 1680-1: S. P. F. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[18] Letter of 21 February 1680-1: *ibid.*

[19] Letter of 28 February 1680-1: *ibid.*

[20] Letter of 4 April 1681: *ibid.*

[21] Secretary Jenkins to Mr. Warwick, 11 February 1680-1, 14 October 1681: S. P. D. E. B., lxviii.

[22] Jenkins to Sir Henry Goodricke, 5 April 1681: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[23] Jenkins to Goodricke, 25 April 1681: *ibid.*

[24] Letter of 18 July 1681: *ibid.*

Early in January 1682 the secretary wrote that a letter had been read the day before—Sunday—"at the Com̄ittee".[27] About this time he wrote to the vice-chamberlain in respect of a Spanish matter, that the king was willing for it to be brought before "the Com̄ittee of forrein Affaires". Shortly after he told him that his letters had been read "at the Com̄ittee".[28] At nearly the same time a newsletter writer said: "The sheriffedome of Lenericke which formerly belonged to L: Hamilton is by the Committee of Councill bestowed upon the Marquesse of Douglasse." [29] This last instance well illustrates the difficulty of handling a great body of similar information: it is not possible to know from such testimony alone whether what was done was transacted in "the committee"—the powerful committee of foreign affairs, or in some other particular committee of the council.

In May 1682 the earl of Arran, writing from Dublin, and, maybe, using his own expression, spoke of information that had been given to the duke of Monmouth "of matters done in the private Committee", and supposed that the king would much resent such information being divulged.[30] In July Secretary Jenkins wrote to Sir Henry Goodricke concerning a part of one of his letters: "I forsee his Ma$^{tie}$ & my Lords of the Comittee will demand of me some explicac̄on of this Paragraph on Sunday next . . . it falls out that yo$^{r}$ Letters find me very often at Windsor, & th$^{t}$ an houre or two before the Comittee of forraigne affaires sits".[31] He wrote to Lord Preston that letters of his had been read before the king in foreign committee.[32] A few weeks later he congratulated him on gaining a diplomatic advantage: the king was pleased, "and my Lords of the Com$^{ee}$ all looked upon it as very honorable to the ambassador.[33] In October he read one of Lord Preston's letters to the king at the committee of foreign affairs.[34] In November and in December he told the ambassador that his letters had been read "at the Com$^{ee}$" and "before the Com$^{tee}$".[35] About the same time he told him: "Your letter of the 30th was produced last night at the committee; it being a great vigil the consideration of the Jersey business was adjourned to another day."[36]

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[25] Jenkins to the vice-chamberlain, 11 July 1681. S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[26] Letter of 18 July 1681: *ibid.*

[27] Jenkins to Goodricke, 2 January 1681-2: *ibid.*

[28] Letters of 8, 23 January 1681-2: *ibid.*

[29] Public Record Office, Admiralty, Greenwich Hospital, Newsletters, ii. 5.

In January 1683 the secretary wrote to Lord Preston that two of his letters had been read the night before—"at the Com$^{ee}$".[37] And he wrote similarly concerning another letter three weeks later.[38] In September he said: "The lords that used to meet here at my Office sate so late this night, that I have just time to thanke Y$^{r}$ Lōp for Y$^{r}$ Lr̃e of the 24th from Fountainebleau." [39] Somewhat later he told him that his last letters had been read by Charles, who called for them afterwards to be read "att the Com$^{tee}$". [40] A week later: "His Maj$^{tie}$ after his wonted manner read over your Lōdps lr̃e of the 27th before it was produced before the Com$^{tee}$" [41] About the same time also the secretary wrote to Sir Richard Bulstrode that his last letters had been read before the king "at the Com$^{tee}$" [42] In December he sent to various representatives of England abroad the transcript of a letter from the commissioners of victualling that had been produced "at the Com$^{tee}$" on Sunday by the lords of the treasury.[43]

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[30] Letter to the duke of Ormonde, 28 May 1682: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, vi. 372.

[31] Letter of 31 July 1682: S. P. F. E. B., clxxxix.

[32] Letters of 24, 31 July 1682: *ibid.*

[33] Jenkins to Lord Preston, 21 August 1682: *ibid.*

[34] Letter to Lord Preston, 23 October 1682: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[35] Letters to Lord Preston, 6 November, 4 December 1682: *ibid.*

[36] Letter to Lord Preston, 25 December 1682: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 361; S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[37] Letter of 22 January 1682-3: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[38] Letter of 12 February 1682-3: *ibid.*

In correspondence of the secretaries at this time there continue to be numerous allusions to "the committee", meeting on Sunday, or at other times, interspersed with as many allusions to the committee of foreign affairs. In some cases the two terms are applied to the same meeting. In most cases circumstances of the time of meeting, the place of meeting, and the character of the business dealt with afford strongest presumption that when mention is made of the committee the writer means nothing else than the foreign committee. After a while the term "committee of foreign affairs" ceases to be used except on rare occasions, but what had been so designated, at the same time that it had also been spoken of as "the committee" continues as "the committee" to act in the same capacity, that is to say, as the small group of principal advisers of the king who under him attended to the principal directing and administrative work of the government of England.

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[39] Letter to Lord Preston, 20 September 1683: *ibid.*

[40] Letter of 15 November 1683: *ibid.*

[41] Letter of 22 November 1683: *ibid.*

[42] Letter of 26 November 1683: *ibid.*

[43] Letters of 10 December 1683: *ibid.*, cxc.

For another generation " the committee " or " the committee of council ", or " the lords of the committee " held chief place under the king in the government of the realm, and the records of the time are filled with allusions to it. In February 1684 Secretary Jenkins wrote to a certain one that his letter had been read before the king " at the Committee ", at a Monday meeting.[44] A little later he wrote to Lord Preston that two of his letters had been produced before the king " in the committee " on two successive days.[45] A week later he wrote to the ambassador in Paris and also to the English resident in Brussels that their letters had been read the day before—Sunday —at " the Com̄ittee ".[46] In 1689 Secretary Nottingham wrote to one " by order of the Lords of the Committe of Council ".[47] Next year he wrote to the earl of Bath that " the Lords of the Committee of Councill wished care taken to preserve order in Cornwall.[48] About the same time he told the lord chief justice that " the L$^{ds}$ of the Committee " wished him to examine and proceed against a certain one.[49]

In 1692 the officers of the ordnance suggested that " the Com̄ittee of Councell would be pleased to send for the Transport Com̄ission$^{rs}$, & give them some direc̄c̄ons " in a matter, that the king's service might not be delayed.[50] A little later Nottingham wrote to a correspondent: " I have received yo$^{r}$ letter . . . and have read it to the Lords of the Comittee ".[51] Shortly after he wrote to the commissioners of the admiralty saying that they and the navy board were desired to be " at the Committee ".[52] In 1693 a report of a committee in the house of lords declared that " the King communicated the Design on *Brest* to the Committee of Council."[53]

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[44] Letter to Mr. Fanshaw, 25 February 1683-4: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[45] Letter of 24 March 1683-4: *H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 369; S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[46] Letters to Lord Preston and to Sir Richard Bulstrode, 31 March 1684: S. P. F. E. B., cxc, cxciii.

[47] S. P. D. E. B., xcviii, 20 June 1689.

[48] Letter of 10 June 1690: *ibid.*

[49] Letter of 7 August 1690: *ibid.*

[50] Letter to Sir Henry Goodricke, 10 March 1691-2: Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, William and Mary, iv. 14.

[51] Letter to Colonel Fletcher, 7 May 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 440.

In April 1693 Godolphin wrote to William that he would receive an account from " the L$^{ds}$ of the Comittee " concerning preparations for a project together with a treasury estimate as to expense.[54] A little later Secretary Trenchard notified a certain one to come to the office of the earl of Nottingham, the other secretary of state, to present himself at " a Committee of the Councill ".[55] From the wording of this designation merely it might be thought that reference was to any one of the standing or temporary committees of the privy council—which were by this time merging into the committee of the whole council, except that in the office of the secretary of state so many of the meetings of the committee of foreign affairs, or " the committee ", had long been held. By this time, apparently, the existence of the powerful central committee or small council was well recognized. In December 1693 it as ordered in the house of lords that the lords with white staves should attend the king and humbly desire: " That He will please to order, That such Proceedings as were lately in Council, or the Committee of Council, relating to the Admirals, or Sir *George Rooke*, may be laid before this House."[56] Some minutes of admiralty and naval business about this time are endorsed: " Committee of Councill ".[57]

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[52] Letter of 16 September 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 547.

[53] *Lords' Journals*, xv. 155.

[54] Letter of 18 April 1693: S. P. D., King William's Chest, xiv. 7.

[55] S. P. D. E. B., xcix, 2 May 1693.

[56] *Lords' Journals*, xv. 319.

[57] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Naval, ii, 17 December 1693, iii, 14 January 1693-4.

In 1695 the earl of Shrewsbury, secretary of state, sent notice that " the Lords of the Committee of Councill " had ordered dispatch of a company of soldiers to Windsor to protect the house of a French dyer from journeymen and apprentices belonging to the dyers' trade.[58] Somewhat later he informed the lord mayor of London that since the safe keeping of conspirators against the king, confined in Newgate, was of great importance, " the Lords of the Committee of the Councill " wished a sufficient force set on guard day and night.[59]

In 1702 Secretary Vernon wrote to the lord high admiral that " the Committee of Councill " would meet the next evening at his office. At the same time he wrote to the duke of Ormonde that " the Committee of the Lords of the Councill " wished his presence at their meeting.[60] A little later, when it was resolved that thirteen men of war should proceed with all speed to Spithead, memorandum was made: " For Sʳ G. Rooke. by direction of the Ld̄s of the Com̄ittee of Councill at the Cockpitt." [61] Shortly after the lord high admiral sent information to " the Lords of the Committee of Councill ".[62]

In July 1702 Nottingham sent word to the lord keeper: [63]

> I . . . write to your Ldp to tell you that the Queen thinks it proper thᵗ something should be said to the Judges (as hath bin accustomed) before they go the Circuits & therefor if yʳ Ldp will Consider, of the matters proper to be recommended to you, (& which with the Queens speech to the Parliament may suggest

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[58] Letter to William Blathwayt, 18 November 1695: S. P. D. E. B., c. 169.

[59] *Ibid.,* 2 March 1695-6.

[60] Letters of 8 April 1702: *ibid.,* ccvi-ccvii. 28, 29.

[61] Ellis Correspondence: Add. MS. 28895, fo. 222.

[62] S. P. D. E. B., civ, 15 May 1702.

[63] Letter of 6 July 1702: *ibid.,* fo. 67.

> proper topicks to y$^{r}$ Ldp) and can be at leisure to come to the Committe att my Office to morrow morning these things may be adjusted preparatory to the meeting of the great Councill.

That is to say, a small powerful committee was preparing what the privy council was to do. How important was the work of this body may be seen also from a communication from Godolphin, lord treasurer, to the earl of Nottingham, secretary of state, about this time. With respect to putting off the meeting of the parliament, the queen wished that he would consider and take the opinion of "the Lords of the Committee", whether she ought to take any new resolution upon the matter.[64]

In 1702 Stepney, the English envoy in Vienna believed it a favorable time to send an English minister to the king of Sweden, that prince being inclined to make peace and furnish troops to the allies. The queen thought it well to send Stepney himself. Thereupon Secretary Hedges wrote to Godolphin: "I have sent his Lr̄es to the Earl of Nottingham, to be laid before my Lords of the Com$^{ee}$, and if the Proposall be approved, have desired his Lordship to send an Account by this Nights post to the Earl of Marlborough".[65] Shortly after Hedges informed Marlborough that the earl of Nottingham would write to him "according to such Resolutions as shall be taken by My Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill at London".[66] Early in 1703 one of the under-secretaries spoke of "les Seigneurs du Com$^{ee}$ du Conseil".[67] "Her Ma$^{tie}$ approved very well of the orders, given by the lords of the Com̄ittee, relating to Holland and Portugall" Godolphin wrote to Nottingham later that year.[68] And he told him shortly after that the queen had empowered "Your Lordships of the Comtee" to regulate all particulars relating to the expedition to Portugal.[69] In October Nottingham informed a correspondent that he had that day read his proposal "to the Committee".[70] In 1704 he asserted that he had first received the confession of Sir John McLean, the Jacobite agent: this "is very evident in the Narrative of tht Plott given into the H of Lds by her Maty order & approbation of the Comee of Council." [71] On another occasion that year Harley, having obtained some information immediately laid the whole matter before "Her Majesty and the Lords of the Committee of Council".[72]

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[64] Letter of 3 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fos. 173, 174.

[65] Letter of 29 September 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ci. 248.

[66] Letter of 4 October 1702: S. P. F. E. B., lxix.

[67] J. Ellis to M. Vryberge, 14 January 1702-3: S. P. D. E. B., ci. 274.

[68] Letter of 4 August 1703: Add. MS. 29589 ii, fo. 76.

In 1705 Secretary Hedges wrote to the lord treasurer that the prince's council—that is, assistant to the lord admiral—"are now with My Lords at the Committee." [73] In September of that year he informed Harley, secretary of state, that the queen would take no resolution in a matter until Sunday at Windsor, where the lord treasurer, Harley, "and the Lords of the Committee are expected to attend her Maty at the usuall hour." [74] Later he informed the lord admiral's council that a representation for promoting trade with the Spaniards in the West Indies had been laid before "My Lords of the Committee of Councill".[75] In his letter book during these years Hedges frequently mentions the committee of council, the lords of the committee, and the lords of the committee of council, while he seldom speaks of the cabinet, to which, however, there are at this time numerous allusions elsewhere.

[69] Letter of 2 September 1703: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 133.

[70] S. P. D. E. B., ccix, 29 October 1703.

[71] Add. MS. 29587, fo. 128.

[72] *Portland MSS., H. M. C.,* 15th report, iv. 90.

[73] S. P. D. E. B., cv. 230, 231.

[74] Letter of 5 September 1705: *ibid.,* fo. 282.

[75] Letter of 27 December 1705: *ibid.,* civ. 473.

In June 1708 " the Lords of the Committee of Council " directed the lord admiral's council to consider the request of the king of Spain: that sixteen ships of war, English and Dutch, might winter in the Mediterranean.[76] In 1709 a letter of the earl of Dalhousie was laid before " the Queen & a Committee of Her Councell ".[77] Next year St. John, secretary of state, wrote that he would present some information to " the Lords of the Committee " next day.[78] About the same time the earl of Dartmouth, the other secretary, presented a letter to " the Lords of the Comm$^{\text{tee}}$ ".[79] During these years the letter books of the secretaries frequently mention meetings of " several Lords " of her majesty's council in the office of the secretary of state.[80] In 1711 " the Lords of the Com$^{\text{tee}}$ " were summoned to meet in the office of the duke of Queensberry, secretary of state for the affairs of Scotland. The marginal endorsement is: " To come to the Com$^{\text{ee}}$ of Council ".[81] " I watch't for Mr. Harley's coming out of the committee of Councill," said a writer in 1711, " wch is held at the Cock-pit, not being able to meet him any where else ".[82] About this time Lord Dartmouth, secretary of state, sent to the lord treasurer a copy of a letter written to the envoy of Genoa by direction of " the Lords of the Comm$^{\text{ee}}$ ".[83] " This morning, at the Committee of Council, My Lord Treasurer gave me your letter ", St. John wrote to a correspondent.[84]

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[76] S. P. D., Naval, vii, 23.

[77] The earl of Sunderland to the earl of Dalhousie, 18 June 1708: S. P. D. E. B., cviii.

[78] Letter of 26 September 1710: S. P. F. E. B., xlviii.

[79] S. P. D. E. B., cx, 6 October 1710.

[80] *Ibid.,* cix, cx.

[81] *Ibid.,* cx, 12 February 1710-11.

[82] Peter Wentworth to Lord Raby, 29 May 1711: *Wentworth Papers, 1705-1739* (ed. by J. J. Cartwright, London, 1883), p. 200.

[83] S. P. D. E. B., cxii, 15 June 1711.

[84] Letter to Mr. Drummond, 26 June 1711: *Letters and Correspondence, Public and Private, of the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Visc. Bolingbroke,* etc. (London, 1798), i. 263.

In 1714 one of the under-secretaries informed a certain one that "the Lords of the Committee of Council" desired his attendance next day at the office of Lord Townshend, secretary of state.[85] Shortly after the attorney general was told that a proclamation being approved by "the Cōmittee of Lords", Secretary Townshend wished him to lay it before the king in privy council.[86] Next year "the Lords of the Committee" considered information about a riot.[87] In 1716 "a Committee of Council" was summoned to meet in the evening at Lord Townshend's office in the Cockpit.[88] In the summer of that year Townshend wrote to the earl of Portmore that he had received from the prince, regent during the first absence of George I in Hanover, a command to lay before "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" complaints against the lieutenant governor of Gibraltar.[89] A little later a communication from the earl of Stanhope, the secretary of state who had accompanied the king abroad, was read to "the Lords of the Committee".[90] In November the prince referred to "the Lords of the Committee" an intercession for prisoners made during the rebellion.[91] In December the lords of the committee of council considered information about a riot at Oxford.[92] In February of the next year the attorney general was summoned to attend "the Lords of the Committee" the next morning at the office of Secretary Methuen.[93] "I went to *Court,* my Lord being gone to a Committee at the *Cockpit* ", Lady Cowper wrote in her diary about that time.[94]

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[85] George Tilson to Mr. Popple, 5 October 1714: S. P. D. E. B., cxlvii.

[86] S. P. D. E. B., cxvii, 30 November 1714.

[87] *Ibid.,* 25 June 1715.

[88] *Ibid.,* cxlvii, 22 February 1715-16.

[89] *Ibid.,* cxviii, 28 July 1716.

[90] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Regencies, i, 24 August 1716 (N. S.).

[91] Methuen to Stanhope, 17 November 1716: S. P. D. E. B., cclxvii.

[92] *Ibid.,* cxix, 31 December 1716.

[93] *Ibid.,* 5 February 1716-17.

Throughout these years the committee of council and the lords of the committee continue to be mentioned frequently in the letter books of the secretaries of state. Apparently the committee was as active and important as it had been under Anne, and it was apparently the real executive council of the nation, much that was sanctioned in the privy council having been decided in the committee beforehand, as had been the case with the committees of foreign affairs of Charles I and of Charles II. In a meeting of the "Lords of the Committee" in the Cockpit in 1717 all of the eight persons noted in the minutes as present are known to have been members of what was then called the cabinet.[95]

In August 1717 Sunderland, by the king's command, laid before "the L$^{ds}$ of the Committee of his Maj$^{es}$ Council" a case of treason at Holywell.[96] Early in the next year he asked the attorney general to complete the drafting of a bill: when it was ready "the Lords of the Committee of Council will appoint a Meeting to consider of it".[97] In 1722 the bishop of Rochester, arrested on a charge of high treason, was examined by the lords of the committee of council—as Guiscard had been a decade before.[98] That same year another suspect was examined before "a Committee of the Lords of the Council", six of the principal ministers present.[99] A little later the lords of the committee, judging it proper for the king's service that the commissioners of oyer and terminer for

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[94] *Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper,* etc. (London, 1864), p. 79.

[95] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, George I, ix, 31 May 1717.

[96] S. P. D. E. B., cxx, 22 August 1717.

[97] *Ibid.,* 16 January 1717-18.

[98] *Ibid.,* cxxiii, 25 August 1722.

[99] S. P. D., George I, xxxvi, 21 September 1722.

Essex should not adjourn court, gave an order to that effect.[100]

In 1729 Queen Caroline, in the absence abroad of her husband, was present at a meeting of "the Committee of Council".[101] In 1732 a box of papers was examined by "the Lords of the Committee of Council at the Cockpit".[102] In 1741 Sir John Norris, the naval commander, records in his journal: "at 7 this Euening I was summoned to a Committee of Counsell at the Duke of newcastle office,—when a Clark of the Counsell was cald in for severall common orders of Counsell after which it was discorsed how to man the fleete and of the depending bill about seamen".[103] From Newcastle's papers we learn that besides Sir John Norris this meeting was attended by nine of the principal ministers, all members of the cabinet.[104] This was evidently the sort of a meeting that had been wont to assemble in Arlington's office in the time of Charles II, in Shrewsbury's in the time of William. That of the first had been called the committee of foreign affairs; of the second "the committee". The meeting of principal ministers in the duke of Newcastle's office is not described by any epithet in the minutes which twice appear in the Newcastle Papers, but from the list of those who attended, and the nature of the business dealt with the meeting might properly be taken for a cabinet.[105] It happens that this meeting is also recorded in the register of the privy council: the same members given as present, but the business done less important, the place of meeting the council chamber.[106] Here it might be taken to be a committee of the whole council acting also as a council. Doubtless what Sir John Norris describes as a meeting of " the committee " made of itself a council for the giving of formal sanction to decisions already made in it.

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[100] S. P. D. E. B., cxxiii, 19 October 1722.

[101] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, George II, xiv, 19 August 1729.

[102] *Ibid.*, xxvii, 12 June 1732.

[103] Add. MS. 28133, 3 March 1740-1.

[104] Add. MS. 33004, 3 March 1740-1.

[105] Add. MS. 32993, fo. 136; 33004, fo. 47.

[106] P. C. R., xcvi, 3 March 1740-1.

With respect to nomenclature alone it is exceedingly difficult to deal with the history of this body. Constantly there is danger of mistaking it for something else, or losing it among other bodies described with like appellation. In 1711 St. John wrote to the secretary at war saying that " a Committee of Council " was appointed to meet. This designation might properly apply to any of the committees of the privy council, and might at this time be thought to signify the committee of the whole council. A few days later he wrote: " I send you inclos'd a Copy of the Minutes which I took on Wednesday last, at the Committee of Councill, which sat at your Office." [107] This description also might be considered applicable to any committee of the council. A little before this, however, the secretary at war had been notified that " the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ " were to meet at the office of one of the secretaries of state, and the marginal endorsement thereon was that he was " to come to the Com$^{ee}$ of Council ".[108] About this time the earl of Dartmouth wrote to Lieutenant-General Earle: " I am to acquaint you that several Lords of Her Ma$^{ty's}$ Council are to meet at Eleven to morrow morning at the Duke of Queensberry's Office & that you are desired to attend their Lordships there at that time." The marginal endorsement is: " to attend the Lords ".[109] This might be taken to be any informal meeting of ministers. The place of the meeting, however, makes it probable that this was a meeting of " the committee ".

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[107] S. P. D. E. B., cix, 27 February, 2 March 1710-11.

[108] *Ibid.*, cx, 12 February 1710-11.

[109] *Ibid.*, 16 March 1710-11.

In July 1711 St. John wrote to the commissioners of trade that in the absence of Lord Dartmouth he had informed "the Lords of the Committee" that the African Company and other persons concerned in certain business were to attend the next Thursday morning, "at which time such of the Lords of the Councill as can possibly attend will not fail to be at Your Office." [110] Here it might be understood that the lords of the committee were actually a committee of the whole council. That this may have been true in theory is possible. That such was the case in fact on a few occasions there is evidence to show. That such was not the case in practice as a rule there is abundant evidence none the less. In 1722 Secretary Carteret wrote to the bishop of Winchester: "Yesterday in the afternoon the Bishop of Rochester was apprehended for High Treason, and . . . being examined before the Lords of the Committee of Council, he was afterward committed Prisoner to the Tower." [111] This might from the designation merely be taken to be a particular committee of the council, or more probably a committee of the whole council, except that the secretaries of state had so long been wont to recount activities of that committee of principal members of the council which met in a secretary's office. On the same day the privy council register records a meeting in the council chamber at Whitehall: "a Committee of the Lords of His Majestys Most Honble Privy Council". The record gives only a committee report relating to Rhode Island. It might, then, certainly seem that this was a meeting of the committee of the whole council, dealing with plantation affairs, except that the members present were ten of the most important ministers, all of the cabinet, and except for the information about the bishop of Rochester, given by Carteret, whom the register notes as present.[112] Much, of course, that great councillors did in their meetings the register of the council did not record. On the other hand certain lists "of Business for the Committee" somewhat later have to do with reports from the lords commissioners for trade and with colonial business almost entirely, and certainly refer to work of the committee of the whole council.[113] In 1732 a newspaper notice declares: "Yesterday Morning a Committee of his Majesty's most Hon. Privy Council was held at the Cockpit, Whitehall; at which the Right Hon. Sir Robert Walpole, and several of the Lords, assisted."[114] It is impossible to be sure of what this meeting was. In 1733 Secretary Harrington wrote that "some of the Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council" were to meet at his apartment in Hampton Court the next Monday morning: the business to consider precedents of ceremonies at marriages of princesses of England with foreign princes.[115] Without supplementary information it would be impossible to know whether this was a particular committee of the privy council—seldom appointed then, a committee of the whole privy council, or a meeting of "the committee" assembling in the secretary's quarters.

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[110] *Ibid.,* cxi, 17 July 1711.

[111] S. P. D. E. B., cxxiii, 25 August 1722.

It would seem that after the earlier years of the reign of George I—when the cabinet was undergoing great changes in relation to the king—the small group of principal ministers was less and less frequently spoken of as the "lords of the committee". In the time of William and of Anne, and for a few years after 1714 "the committee" seemed to engross the administration of the kingdom, and was mentioned far more frequently than the cabinet council. Thereafter it was not so often mentioned to describe the great, central, small body of ministers of the king. More and more were the appellations "a committee of council", "the committee of the council", "the lords of the committee of council" used to designate the committee of the whole privy council, which was taking over most of the actual work of the privy council during this time; while the powerful group of effective ministers was spoken of almost exclusively as "cabinet" or "cabinet council". In the period of William and of Anne "the committee" and the cabinet had been indistinguishable in respect of personnel and the work they performed, and a great many allusions make it certain that they were generally regarded as one and the same body to be described almost indifferently by one or other title. For a few years after the coming of the Hanoverians that continued to be so. Thereafter, however, despite the fact that some continued to speak of the principal ministers and members of the privy council, who now controlled and directed the government of Great Britain, as "the committee" or "some of the lords of the council", they were usually spoken of as the "cabinet" or "the lords of the cabinet council", and understood to be a limited group; while "committee of the council" though sometimes used of a division of the privy council was generally understood to mean the committee of the whole council.

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[112] P. C. R., lxxxviii, 25 August 1722.

[113] Public Record Office, State Papers, Domestic, Various, i. 1729-1733.

[114] *The Daily Courant,* 7 October 1732.

[115] S. P. D. E. B., cxxii, 21 September 1733.

It might be said that what was so for the most part after 1720 was really so before that time also; that "the committee" or "a committee of the lords of the council" means in the earlier period what it signifies in the later; that at best ambiguity of phraseology must make it hopeless to effect any clear distinction of identification. A detailed examination, however, of the composition of "the committee" in the last part of the

Stuart period, a study of the minutes of numerous meetings that remain, and an inspection of the work done by this body, taken in relation to similar things in respect of ordinary council committees and of what men called the cabinet, will show that not to be the case. A study of numerous records of particular committees of the privy council and of the committee of the whole council makes it evident that these bodies in the course of any number of years were attended by a large number of council members, important and unimportant, and that what these committees did was almost invariably the less weighty work of the council.[116] On the other hand the records of "the committee" show that its membership was restricted to a small number of the leading ministers—such members of the privy council as are known to have been of what was called the committee of foreign affairs or what continued to be called the cabinet; while its work, though on occasion unimportant matters were dealt with, was generally consideration of foreign affairs and other of the most important things of the realm.

There was also in Scotland, at least about the end of the reign of Charles II and the beginning of his successor's, an all-important committee of the council, known as the "secret committee", which carried on the government of the country for the king of Scotland and of England, administering all the principal concerns of the northern country. Information about this small council remains in the correspondence of some of its members with officials in London. In April 1685 the earl of Moray urged that a scheme be considered by parliament, council, or the secret committee, as though they were the three foremost bodies in Scotland.[117] Like "the committee" in

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[116] E. R. Turner, *The Privy Council of England,* ii. 179-432.

[117] Letter to the duke of Queensberry, Whitehall, 30 April 1685: *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig,* ii. 60.

England at the same time, it was under the king the principal organ in the government of the state. On another occasion Moray declared: "the Secret Comity uear persons of so eminent parts and so understanding bothe in the Laws and interests of the kindome, that the King could loge the trust and management of his goverment saefly no uhar els".[118] The members of the body were styled "the Lords of the Secret Commity".[119] In October 1685 a letter of James II, approving the conduct of the duke of Queensberry, royal high commissioner in the parliament of Scotland, spoke of him as "Lord of our Secret Council and Secret Committee".[120] Next year another letter of James, about religious matters, was addressed "to the Earl of Perth, Chancellor, and Lords of the Secret Committee of the Privy Council".[121] In the correspondence of the earl of Moray, one of the secretaries of state in Scotland, with Queensberry, there is such frequent mention of the secret committee of the Scots privy council that sometimes it is designated merely with a cymbol or cipher.[122]

Membership in the secret committee, as in the cabinet council in England, depended altogether on the king. In February 1685 Moray wrote with respect to Lord St. Andrews: "you may rest assured the King uill not put him on the Secret Commity, nor will it be in his power to doe any thinge".[123] Shortly after James II wrote to the commissioner, the chancellor, and other lords of the committee:[124]

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[118] Moray to Queensberry, Whitehall, 20 April 1685: *ibid.*, p. 55.

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[120] Letter of 31 October 1685: *Buccleuch MSS., H.M.C.*, 15th report, viii. 150.

[121] Letter of 4 March 1685-6: *Traquair House MSS., H.M.C.*, 9th report, appendix, ii. 251.

[122] *Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig*, ii. 49.

[123] Letter to Queensberry, 26 February 1684-5: *ibid.*, p. 46.

[124] Letter of 8 May 1685: *Buccleuch MSS., H.M.C.*, 15th report, viii. 100.

> Whereas in consideration both of the eminent loyalty and great parts and experience of our right trusty and right welbeloved cousin, George, Earl of Dunbarton, wee haue thought fit to adde him to the present number of the lords of the secrett committee of our Privy Councell of that our ancient kingdome: It is now our will and pleasure, and wee doe hereby authorise and require you to admitt and receive him into that our secrett committee, and to haue full power and priviledge of consulting, debating and voting in all matters whatsoever that are to be transacted therein, with the same freedome that is enjoyed by any of your number: He being alwayes obliged to take the oath of secrecy, that is usually taken by your selves, at all times when our service shall require the same.

The members were the principal servants of the king in Scotland. At a meeting held, apparently, in 1685 were present the lord treasurer, the lord privy seal, the president, the advocate, and the register.[125]

During this period the king's affairs at Edinburgh were evidently guided by the secret committee, the king determining largely on the committee's advice. In August 1684 Charles II, after the matter had been discussed, it would seem, in a cabinet council at Hampton Court, desired advice from "the Secret Commity" about placing as lieutenants in the western shires of Scotland those fittest for his service.[126] Later he sent them thanks for the care and good service of which they had given eminent proofs.[127] In 1685 on arrival of the earl of Drumlanrig James II received him along with the earl of Moray and two others. At this audience were read a letter from the Scots privy council and another of "your Lordships of the Secret Commity's".[128] Shortly after, when James issued instructions to the duke of Queensberry, that high official was bidden to pass various laws, "and such other acts as you with the aduice of the secret committee of the privy councell shall find for the good of our service . . . You are in all matters entrusted to you to advise with the said committee of our privy councell." [129] There were frequent communications from the secret committee to the king, which were at this time communicated to him by one of the Scots secretaries of state, stationed at the court in England.[130]

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[125] Letter of 8 May 1685: Buccleuch MSS., H. M. C., 15 report, viii, p. 131.

[126] Moray to Queensberry, Whitehall, 9 August 1684: *Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig,* ii. 31.

[127] *Ibid.,* p. 33.

The work of this committee had to do with management of parliament, appointment of officials, various matters of policy and administration. In 1684 "the aduice of the Secret Commity conserninge the Parlament and other things recommended by them" were received and accepted.[131] In 1685 Moray wrote to Queensberry: "Ther is a letter to ther Lordships of the Secret Commity by the King's command . . . for advice conserning the calinge of a Parliament". [132] Somewhat later James told Moray that the duke of Queensberry should name various officers "uithe the aduyice of the Secret Commity".[133] A few days before the death of Charles II the secret committee sent the king proposals about an act of indemnity and other proposals concerning trade between Scotland and England.[134]

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[128] Moray to Queensberry, 24 February 1684-5: *ibid.,* p. 45.

[129] 28 March 1685: *Buccleuch MSS., H.M.C.,* 15th report, viii. 93.

[130] For example, *Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig,* ii. 59, 62.

[131] Moray to Queensberry, Windsor, 26 July 1684: *ibid.,* p. 30.

[132] Letter of 10 February 1684-5: *ibid.,* p. 42.

[133] Moray to Queensberry, Whitehall, 14 May 1685: *ibid.,* p. 66.

[134] Moray to Queensberry, 24 January 1684-5: *ibid.,* p. 40.

# CHAPTER VII

## STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF "THE COMMITTEE"

To STUDY the lords of the committee or "the committee" it is necessary first to be able to identify the body; and no study of the subject can be properly made unless the difficulty of such identification is kept present in mind. The terms of description are such that with the terms alone one can seldom be sure that distinction or identification is valid. It would almost seem that at times the scribes who wrote the record were not absolutely clear as to what term ought to be used, or else were certain that different terms might be used to describe the same body. The clerk of the privy council, for example, has sometimes a slightly different term in the body of the minutes from that which in summary he uses in the margin. There are many instances in which a term denotes different bodies in different places, and there are numerous cases where the term in the record affords no certainty as to what body is the subject of mention.

In April 1694 an order of council about the militia of Connecticut was referred to "the Right Honōble the Lords of the Committee of Trade & Plantations". Immediately after they are spoken of as "the Lords of the Committee".[1] About the same time minutes of a meeting of the lord privy seal, Lord Rochester—holding no great office, and Secretary Trenchard are endorsed "Committee of Councill". The smallness of the number present might equally indicate that this was a particular committee or else a committee of the whole privy council. The business dealt with had to do only with Irish affairs.[2] In August "the Lords of the Committee" desired the lords of the admiralty to send a vessel from Plymouth or from Falmouth to Jamaica: they were the lords of the committee of trade and plantations.[3]

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[1] P. C. R., lxxv, 19 April 1694.

In April 1696 there was at Kensington a meeting in presence of the king, of the archbishop of Canterbury, the prince, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, Edward Russell—first commissioner of the admiralty, the earl of Portland—groom of the stole, the earl of Shrewsbury—secretary of state, and the other secretary—Sir John Trenchard. A petition was read. Permission to go beyond the seas was granted to two persons. Various matters relating to the moving of naval stores and the disposition of ships were dealt with. A letter was read. From the list of those who attended this would seem almost certainly to be a meeting of "the committee" previously known as the committee of foreign affairs. From the nature of the business dealt with one might doubt whether it was the principal group of king's ministers or an ordinary committee of the council—though it must always be remembered that council and committee minutes cannot be depended on to reveal all the more important business transacted at a meeting, and there are many instances in which different minutes of the same meeting of "the committee" contain respectively things not found in the others. In this instance doubt as to the character of the body is increased when Shrewsbury, who took the minutes, goes on to record: "The Committee being turned into a Council, the embargo was taken off, and notice ordered to be given to the merchants that with the first fair wind their convoys should be ready." [4] This would almost certainly indicate a meeting of the committee of the whole council, since the members of such committees, after acting as a committee, often sat also as a privy council.[5] On the whole it is probable that the group of principal ministers of the king, sometimes called cabinet council and at others "the committee", was here considering itself as a committee of the whole council, or afterwards so considering itself, and turning itself into a privy council for formal sanctioning of business with respect to which it had made its decisions.

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[2] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 21 April 1694.

[3] Public Record Office, Journal of the Committee of Trade and Plantations: Colonial Office, 391, vii, 16 August 1694.

In 1702 Secretary Vernon informed the commissioners of transport that they were to attend "a Committee of the Lords of the Councill" at his office the next day.[6] This was doubtless a meeting of "the committee"; but in the register of the privy council that year reports of the committees of the whole council, committees for hearing appeals from the plantations, and committees for hearing appeals from Jersey and Guernsey all begin with the phrase "The Lords of the Committee".[7] In 1711 Bolingbroke, secretary of state, wrote to the queen: "The Lords of the Committee of Council met this morning at the Cockpit, and directed the Earl of Dartmouth and myself to confer with Monsieur Mesnager." [8] This was most probably a meeting of "the committee" engaged with foreign affairs. That day according to the register of the council "The Right Hono$^{ble}$ the Lords of the Councill Meet in a Comittee to Consider M$^{r}$ Attorneys Reports on Irish Bills." The meeting was in the council chamber at Whitehall—that is to say, in the immediate proximity of the place where the other meeting was held. There were fourteen members of the council present—a larger body than the cabinet or "the committee" of that time.[9] Almost certainly this was a session of the committee of the whole council, or of the committee to consider Irish bills. Doubtless those who attended the smaller meeting made up the larger one with the addition of some other members of the council. In 1714 Bolingbroke wrote to Anne: "A Committee of Council sits to-morrow morning, and on Friday in the evening, there is to be a Committee in the Council Chamber, to prepare an order to be laid before your Majesty, for the taking off the imposition on French shipping".[10] Again the first may be "the committee", the second a committee of the whole council or possibly a particular committee of the council.

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[4] *H.M.C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 324.

[5] Turner, *The Privy Council of England,* ii. 378-80, 397-401.

[6] S.P.D.E.B., ccvi-ccvii, 20 April 1702.

[7] P.C.R., lxxix.

[8] Letter of 20 September 1711: Bolingbroke, *Letters,* i. 367.

Numerous remaining minutes of meetings, however, make it evident that during this period a small, powerful body like the earlier "committee of foreign affairs" and like the contemporary "cabinet" council was known by the name of "the committee", while its members were "the lords of the committee", and that its membership was restricted to the principal ministers and confidential advisers of the king, while its work was the important business of government—like what the privy council had done a century before and like what had been dealt with by the foreign committee in the time of Charles II.

In 1682 on two successive days in January there were meetings of the principal councillors of Charles II to advise him with respect to very important questions of policy. The minutes are called "Proceedings of the Com$^{ttee}$ on the 21 & 22 of Jan. last". The manuscript, which is now among the Shaftesbury Papers, was apparently sent to Shaftesbury, for in the margin on the last page is the endorsement, it would seem by himself: " Proceedings of the Com̄ittee of Council ". The paper contains speeches made at the first meeting by Hyde—first lord of the treasury, Halifax—of the committee of trade and plantations, Clarendon—treasurer and receiver general of the queen's revenues, Secretary Jenkins, and Secretary Conway. Others may have been present. At the end of the record of the first meeting is the note: " My Lord Conway His Ma$^{tie}$ hath ordered you My L$^{d}$ Hyde, My L$^{d}$ Hallifax M$^{r}$ Seymour, Secretary Jenkins L$^{d}$ Chamberlain L$^{d}$ President, L$^{d}$ Chancell$^{r}$ and Bp of Canterbury to attend Him at 4. a Clock." At this meeting the king, the lord chancellor, Seymour—holding no great office, Secretary Jenkins, the lord president, the lord chamberlain, and Lord Hyde spoke.[11] It is evident that this meeting of " the committee " was attended of those principal ministers of Charles II who made up the foreign committee or cabinet council.[12]

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[9] P. C. R., lxxxiii, 20 September 1711.

[10] Letter of 20 January 1713-14: *Letters,* iv. 438.

In 1690, when William was about to depart from England on his expedition into Ireland, Mary, who was left as regent, wrote in her diary: " Soon after he made choice of 9 persons who should sit as a Committee during his absence; which were the Lord President, Lord Stuart, Lord Chamberlain, Lord Pembroke, the two Secretaries of State, Lord Chief Justice Holt, Mr. Comptroller and Mr. Vice Chamberlain." [13] This body, which so much resembles the committees of foreign affairs of the time of Charles I, in that it was composed of the principal members of the council, is elsewhere spoken of by the queen as "my Cabinet Council",[14] and is frequently spoken of as "the committee".

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[11] Public Record Office, Shaftesbury Papers, 6$^{B}$, no. 445.

[12] W. D. Christie, *A Life of Anthony Ashley Cooper, First Earl of Shaftesbury*, etc., (London, 1871), ii, appendix, pp. cxviii-cxxii, calls this body the committee of foreign affairs; it certainly was, but that designation nowhere occurs in the record.

[13] R. Doebner, *Memoirs of Mary* (Leipzig, 1886), pp. 23, 24.

In March 1694 a meeting of the "Committee of Councill", held at Kensington, in the presence of the king, was attended by the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, the earl of Rochester—holding no great office, Lord Sydney—lord lieutenant of Ireland, Sir Edward Seymour—commissioner of the treasury, the lord president, the lord steward, the earl of Shrewsbury, Russell—admiral of the fleet, and Secretary Trenchard. The business transacted is differently given in the two sets of minutes that remain—taken most probably by the two secretaries of state, Shrewsbury and Trenchard.[15] Most probably this was no meeting of a committee of the whole council, since there is nothing about it in the council register, though that by itself is no proof. Here were the principal ministers meeting in the presence of the king as had been the case with the committee of foreign affairs and the cabinet for a long time.

In October 1695 Shrewsbury, secretary of state, wrote to secretary Trumbull that the recorder of London had sent a list of convicted persons for the king's determination about them; that it was impossible for the king, then absent, to be informed respecting the circumstances of their cases; accordingly Trumbull was to summon the archbishop, the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, and Lord Godolphin—first lord of the treasury, to meet with himself; and if in the opinion "of those Lords" any of the persons condemned were proper objects of mercy execution was to be stayed until the king's further pleasure was known.[16]

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[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.

[15] *H.M.C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i, 61; S.P.D., William and Mary, v, 25 March 1694.

[16] Letter of 27 October 1695: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 247.

In 1717 there was a meeting at which the "Lords of the Committee Present" were the duke of Kingston—lord privy seal, the duke of Roxburghe—secretary of state for Scotland, the earl of Sunderland—secretary of state, the earl of Berkeley—first lord of the admiralty, the lord chief justice, and the writer of the minutes—who was probably Joseph Addison, secretary of state. All of those present are from other records known to have been members of the cabinet at that time. The business concerned a variety of matters: petitions were considered; two reports from the board of trade were dealt with; the case of a certain one was referred to the privy council; a letter with a discretionary order was to be sent to the English ambassador at Constantinople; another letter from the ambassador was read; a letter from the ambassador in Paris was read, and an answer to it approved. This was the sort of work that had been done by the foreign committee half a century before. The paper is endorsed: "Minutes taken at the Committee".[17]

In April 1718 the archbishop of Canterbury, the lord chancellor, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, the duke of Marlborough—captain general, the duke of Bolton—lord lieutenant of Ireland, the duke of Roxburghe, the earl of Berkeley, the earl of Stanhope—secretary of state, and Lord Parker—chief justice, each received a letter from James Craggs, secretary of state, saying that "the Lords of the Committee of Council" would meet regularly in the future.[18] This again was undoubtedly a group of the principal ministers of the king.

It chances that for a period of some years during the period of William III there exists a large number of minutes taken at meetings of "the committee". The preservation of such records seems to have been largely accidental, and often cannot be explained, at the same time that the student has no reason to suspect, because of the absence of particular records for certain years, that such records were not taken during those years also. For example, the letter books of the secretaries of state, which contain so many allusions first to the committee of intelligence, then to the committee of foreign affairs, and presently to "the committee" are very full for the last years of the reign of Charles II, while for the reign of James II they afford comparatively little, and information has to be gleaned mostly from outside sources. So for the years 1694, 1695, and 1696 there happen to be numerous records of a body of privy councillors, sometimes denoted as "the committee" or "the committee of council", less frequently as "cabinet", and most often not described by any epithet. Some of these minutes were taken, it would seem by one of the secretaries of state and, as it chanced, remained with the miscellaneous papers of the secretary in his office, and are now among the State Papers, Domestic, William and Mary. A larger and more important body of such minutes were made by the earl of Shrewsbury, the other secretary of state during these years, or were made for him, and were afterwards taken away by him. They are now in the Buccleuch MSS., a private collection. Others are to be found scattered at random in various places, such, for example, as the State Papers, Domestic, Naval. With respect to this particular problem these minutes are of primary importance, since from study possible in them it is evident that the body referred to so often as "the committee" or "the committee of council" was thus described in restricted sense, that it was no ordinary committee of the council and not a committee of the whole council, but a limited number of the principal ministers of the king attending to a great number of things including his most important concerns.

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[17] S. P. D., George I, ix, 9 June 1717.

[18] S. P. D. E. B., cxix, 14 April 1718.

At a meeting of the " Committee of Councill " held in February 1694 on Sunday in presence of the king, there were the lord keeper, the lord steward, the lord privy seal, Lord Rochester, Viscount Sidney—lord lieutenant of Ireland, Baron Godolphin—first lord of the treasury, and a secretary of state. The business had to do with searching of coaches, prisoners of war, sending an emissary to Flanders, and admiralty matters.[19] A few days later at a " Committee of Councill " were present the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, Lord Coningsby—vice treasurer of Ireland, Mr. Russell—first lord of the admiralty, and one of the secretaries, while four others, including the attorney general and the solicitor general also attended. Various matters were to be disposed of, and some were to be submitted to the king.[20] The following Sunday there was another " Committee of Councill " in presence of the king, attended by the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, the earl of Portland—groom of the stole, Viscount Sidney, Mr. Russell, and the secretary. The victuallers were ordered to give the king a weekly account of the progress they made in procuring provisions for the fleet; a rendezvous for the ships was appointed; and it was agreed to summon " the Committee to meet to morrow at the office in the evening ".[21] Next day a " Committee of Councill " was attended by the lord steward, Lord Sidney, Mr. Russell, and one of the secretaries: drafts of orders to be signed by the king were settled.[22] On the following day Lord Rochester, Lord Sidney, the lord chamberlain, and a secretary settled an order to Sir Francis Wheeler recalling him from the straits as soon as he should have convoyed the Turkey fleet and other ships as far as directed in his former instructions.[23]

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[19] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 4 February 1693-4.

[20] *Ibid.*, 8 February 1693-4.

[21] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 11 February 1693-4.

[22] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 12 February 1693-4.

On the next Sunday a "Committee of Councill" in presence of William was attended by the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, the earl of Portland, the earl of Rochester, Lord Sidney, Godolphin—most of these particular minutes seem to have been taken by Secretary Trenchard, so it is possible that he attended also. It was here ordered that the lord mayor of London be notified that the king with some of the lords of the council would visit the common council; a direction was given to the judge of the prerogative and the dean of the arches; a memorial was referred to the lords of the treasury; the establishment of marine regiments and various naval matters were considered.[24] A week later the king in a "Committee of Councill" attended by the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, the lord steward, Sir Edward Seymour—a commissioner of the treasury, Russell and a secretary, dealt with ordnance, military, and admiralty affairs. It was "ordered by the King verbally" that ships cruising in the Channel should look in upon the islands as often as could be.[25]

The first Sunday in March William presided over a "Committee of Councill" at which were present the lord keeper, the lord steward, the earl of Rochester, the lord chamberlain, Godolphin, the earl of Shrewsbury—secretary of state, Sir Edward Seymour, Lord Sidney, Russell, and Secretary Trenchard. The lord mayor was to be written to; an order went to the treasury; a petition was referred to the attorney general.[26] Trenchard writing the next day to the lords of the treasury spoke of the order being given at " a Committee of Councill ".[27] On the day when the " Committee " held this meeting, there was a meeting also of the privy council. At the council were present besides the king seven of those at the committee.[28]

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[23] *Ibid.*, 13 February 1693-4.

[24] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 18 February 1693-4.

[25] *Ibid.*, 25 February 1693-4.

A fortnight later a meeting of the " Committee of Councill " was again held on Sunday. Besides the king were present the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, Godolphin, Shrewsbury, Seymour, Russell, and Trenchard. Foreign and domestic business and matters concerning Ireland were dealt with.[29] A week later the king held a " Committee of Councill " at which were present the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, Rochester, Shrewsbury, Sidney, Russell, Seymour, and Trenchard. A warrant was to be issued to the admiralty and an order prepared according to proposals of the Levant Company. Shrewsbury's notes of this same meeting which he calls " Committee ", indicate that it was held at Kensington, and mention a proposal about ships in the North Sea.[30]

It is evident that these meetings, like those of the committee of foreign affairs and of the cabinet at an earlier time and like those of the cabinet at a later time, were being held pretty regularly on Sundays, with others at intervals between. On the first Sunday in April 1694 a " Committee of Councill " was held by William. Present were the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, the lord steward, Shrewsbury, Rochester, Sidney, Godolphin, Russell, Seymour, and Trenchard. A vessel was to be discharged; a petition to be heard before the council; and an account referred to the lords of the treasury.[31] A week later what Shrewsbury calls "Committee" and what Trenchard calls "Committee of Councill" met at Kensington in presence of the king. Present were the lord privy seal, the lord president, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, Sidney, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Russell, Seymour, and Trenchard. The two sets of minutes report different business, and perhaps both of them do not record it all. At this meeting a report of the lords justices of Ireland was referred to the commissioners of the treasury, as was a petition; and matters relating to the sick and wounded and to admiralty affairs were settled.[32] A small meeting, of which the minutes are endorsed "Committee of Councill", was attended by three—the lord privy seal, Lord Rochester, and Trenchard—some two weeks later.[33] The next day, Sunday, the "Committee of Councill" was held by the king at Kensington. Present were the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, the lord steward, the duke of Shrewsbury, the earl of Rochester, the earl of Portland, Godolphin, Russell, Viscount Sidney, and Secretary Trenchard. Irish and admiralty matters were dealt with.[34]

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[26] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 4 March 1693-4.

[27] S. P. D. E. B., xcix, 5 March 1693-4.

[28] P. C. R., lxxv, 4 March 1693-4.

[29] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 18 March 1693-4.

[30] *Ibid.*, 25 March 1694; *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House*, ii, part i. 61.

In May, according to minutes in Shrewsbury's hand, there was a meeting of the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, and the two secretaries, at which was discussed the very secret and important matter of the attempt upon Brest.[35] A few days later was another meeting, of which the minutes are endorsed "Committee of Councill", attended by the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, Shrewsbury, the earl of Romney—formerly Viscount Sidney, and Secretary Trenchard. Admiralty and naval matters were dealt with.[36]

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[31] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 1 April 1694.

[32] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 8 April 1694; *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 61.

[33] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 21 April 1694.

[34] *Ibid.,* 22 April 1694: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 63.

[35] 9 May 1694: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 65.

In July were held two meetings—"Comittee of Councill" and "Committee of Councill"—at which admiralty, naval, or military matters were dealt with, and of which the minutes apparently are now to be found only among the naval papers. At the first of these meetings the lord keeper and the two secretaries only were present.[37] At the other the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the duke of Shrewsbury, the marquis of Normanby—holding no great office, the lord chamberlain, the earl of Romney, and Secretary Trenchard.[38] At the end of the month there was a meeting of what Shrewsbury calls the "Lords of the Committee": the lord keeper, Normanby, the lord president, the lord chamberlain, the lord privy seal, Romney, and the two secretaries.[39]

Early in August was a meeting of the "Committee of Councill" attended by lord keeper, lord president, Lord Berkeley—minister plenipotentiary to the Hague, lord privy seal, Shrewsbury, Normanby, Romney, and Trenchard. Military and naval matters were settled.[40] Six of them, together with one other, were also at a meeting of the committee of trade and plantations held in the council chamber at Whitehall the same day.[41] It would be useless to multiply examples further. During August of this year there were similar meetings, of which there are minutes apparently in the handwriting of Lord Berkeley, while for some of them other minutes were made by the duke of Shrewsbury.[42] All of the minutes of these meetings preserved among the naval papers are endorsed " Committee of Councill ".

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[36] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 14 May 1694: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 66.

[37] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 16 July 1694.

[38] *Ibid.*, 26 July 1694.

[39] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 107; S. P. D., Naval, iii, 31 July 1694.

[40] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 109; S. P. D., Naval, iv, 1 August 1694—according to this latter source the lord chamberlain was present, while no mention is made of Lord Berkeley.

During 1694 thirteen meetings of this " committee of council " remain recorded by Secretary Trenchard, for the period 4 February to 22 April. The king was present nine times. Altogether fourteen members of the privy council attended:

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord keeper | Sir John Somers |
| lord privy seal | earl of Pembroke |
| earl of Rochester | holding no great office |
| lord lieutenant of Ireland | Viscount Sydney |
| lord steward | earl of Devonshire |
| first lord of the treasury | Baron Godolphin |
| secretary of state | Sir John Trenchard |
| vice treasurer of Ireland | Lord Coningsby |
| first lord of the admiralty | Edward Russell |
| lord president | marquis of Carmarthen |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Dorset |
| groom of the stole | earl of Portland |
| commissioner of the treasury | Sir Edward Seymour |
| secretary of state | duke of Shrewsbury |

Portland attended twice and Coningsby only once, so that this was practically a group of twelve of the principal councillors of the king, meeting generally in the king's presence.[43]

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[41] C. O. 391, vii, 1 August 1694.

[42] S. P. D., Naval, iv, 2, 3, 11, 14, 15, 23, 27 August 1694; *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 109, 117, 120.

During this year the notes taken by Shrewsbury concern twenty-one meetings, for the period 5 March to 28 September. Seven of these meetings are designated by the secretary as committees of council. The others are not described in the record that is available for study, and may be unendorsed.[44] Most probably all these minutes relate to meetings of the same kind. The king was present four times—it should be remembered that he was abroad from 6 May to 9 November. Altogether eighteen members of the council attended; the largest presence at a meeting was twelve; the average attendance somewhat less than seven. The lord chamberlain, the earl of Berkeley, and the earl of Portland attended one time only each, and the duke of Devonshire twice. Eleven members attended four times or less. All those who came were important members of the council, and those who came regularly were the principal ministers of the king at hand. Possibly some were called in occasionally and for particular purpose, and were not considered " members " of the group.[45] It may be added that during this year, 5 March to 10 December, in the register of the council, there is record of twelve committees—for trade and plantations, for Ireland, and especially for Jersey and Guernsey, that is to say, for the most part, if not altogether, committees of the whole privy council. To these various committees came twenty-two of the privy council. Some of those tho attended most regularly like the earl of Bridgewater—made first commissioner of trade and plantations the next year—who was present at seven meetings, and Sir Henry Goodricke—lieutenant-general of the ordnance—who came to eleven, were never at the committees recorded by the secretaries of state as "committee of council", nor were eight of the others who attended.[46]

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[43] S. P. D., William and Mary, v.

[44] The editor in the *Historical Manuscripts Commission Report* regarded these meetings as generally of the privy council, which is certainly not so. I have not felt sure that all the endorsements were reproduced in his printed edition. It would have been most important for this and other parts of my study had permission been obtained to examine the originals in detail. Every effort was made to secure such permission for me, but without avail, the owner being unwilling to allow more than very brief inspection, which, being useless, I did not care to make. In such case I dare say the investigator is fully as reluctant to urge intrusion as the possessor may be to allow it.

[45] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i.

During 1695 there remain minutes by Shrewsbury of seventeen meetings, for the period 4 May to 22 December. One of them he calls a committee of council, the others are undesignated but evidently similar in respect of activity and personnel. At these meetings the king was present ten times. Altogether, besides the king, thirteen were present on different occasions, the average attendance being less than eight. But it should be noted that the Prince of Denmark came twice, and that Sir Stephen Fox and Mr. Smith, who came once each may have been called in on particular business. It was essentially a group of ten of the king's principal ministers meeting usually in his presence—when he was in England.[47]

The compactness and importance of the committee is more evident in the minutes of Shrewsbury which relate to a part of the next year. From 5 January to 1 May 1696 there remain his minutes for nineteen meetings. Eighteen times was William present. At the various meetings altogether eleven of the privy council were present:

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[46] P. C. R., lxxv, lxxvi.

[47] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i.

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | Thomas Tenison |
| lord keeper | Sir John Somers |
| lord privy seal | earl of Pembroke |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Sunderland |
| secretary of state | duke of Shrewsbury |
| first lord of the treasury | Baron Godolphin |
| groom of the stole | earl of Portland |
| first lord of the admiralty | Edward Russell |
| secretary of state | Sir William Trumbull |
| Prince George of Denmark | |
| lord steward | duke of Devonshire |

The average attendance was a little under nine; only one member came as few as eleven times. It was practically a limited body of the same members, all of them the important ministers and advisers of the crown.[48]

The record afforded by the minutes of Shrewsbury becomes scanty after this time. For 1697 he records only three meetings. Fourteen members attended. The average attendance was nine.[49]

Valuable as is this information it may be objected that it is too scanty for any certain conclusions to be drawn. That is true, if this evidence be taken by itself, for there is on the one hand no indication as to what was the attendance at numerous other meetings which may have been held, nor is it certain whether some of those who attended infrequently may not have been called in occasionally not as regular members of the body but for particular purpose on special occasion. Taken in conjunction with much other miscellaneous information, however, it is evident that here was no ordinary committee of the council, nor was it the committee of the whole council to which any or all of the council members might come, and to which a large number would come in course of time. In the meetings reported by Trenchard and by Shrewsbury, especially, a variety of important things was considered and dealt with very unlike what was being done at this time either in the privy council or in ordinary committees of the council. The work of the "Committee of Councill" which they detail is like what is known of the cabinet council at this time, and like what had been done by the groups called committee of foreign affairs and "the committee".

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[48] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i.

[49] *Ibid.,* part ii.

After the time of William, while there is much information about "the committee", and though for some time its activity and its importance in no wise diminished, only occasional minutes of such meetings may be found. In 1703 a meeting of "the Lords of the Committee" was attended by the archbishop, the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, and the earl of Romney—groom of the stole. They directed movements of ships of war, ordered the prince's council to attend to transporting troops, and granted a protection to a Portuguese ship.[50] In 1708 there is notice of various prisoners, who "were all examined befor the Committe of Councill, present the two Secretaries, Chancellor, President of the Privie Councill, Treasaurer, and Canterberry."[51] Two years later a group at the Cockpit consisting of the lord steward, the duke of Queensberry—secretary of state for Scotland, earl Poulet—first lord of the treasury, Secretary St. John, Secretary Dartmouth, the lord president, and the duke of Ormonde—lord lieutenant of Ireland, read a report from the attorney general and the solicitor general about information against Lord Carmarthen: the report to be laid before the queen; Carmarthen to be informed and heard.[52] A few days later another meeting assembled at the Cockpit: it was attended by the lord president, the lord steward, the duke of Queensberry, Secretary St. John, Lord Dartmouth, Lord Poulet, the lord keeper, the lord chancellor—either this is an error in the record, since there was no lord chancellor at this time, or the writer of the minutes refers to Earl Cowper who had been lord chancellor until his resignation from that office the preceding September—and Robert Harley—chancellor of the exchequer, examined Lord Carmarthen.[53]

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[50] S. P. D. E. B., cxlvi, 30 September 1703.

[51] Lord Belhaven to the duke of Hamilton, London, 19 June 1708: *Marchmont MSS., H. M. C.*, 14th report, iii. 159.

During 1717 there are " Minutes " of several meetings of important ministers, which are not described in the record. They may be of the cabinet council or they may be of " the committee ", the absence of the king making the latter probable, as will be shown hereafter. At a meeting held in the Cockpit in January in respect of the arrest of Count Gyllenborg, the Swedish ambassador who had been conspiring with the Jacobites, were present the lord chancellor, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, the duke of Roxburghe—secretary of state for Scotland, the earl of Orford—first lord of the admiralty, Viscount Townshend—lord lieutenant of Ireland, the duke of Kent—lord steward, Robert Walpole—first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, the earl of Sunderland—vice treasurer of Ireland, Paul Methuen and James Stanhope—secretaries of state.[54] A few days afterward a meeting was held at the Cockpit to consider measures against Sweden. Present were the archbishop of Canterbury, the lord chancellor, the lord privy seal, the lord chamberlain, the duke of Roxburghe, Lord Townshend, Lord Chief Justice Parker, the duke of Kent, Lord Orford, the earl of Sunderland, Methuen, and Stanhope.[55] With respect to Swedish affairs another meeting of twelve was held at the Cockpit about three weeks later. It was attended by virtually the same group: the lord steward and Walpole were present while the duke of Kent and Stanhope were absent.[56] These and other papers like them have merely the endorsement " Minutes ". In August six members of the privy council—all of them members of the cabinet—met in the Cockpit: for the most part the business recorded has to do with reports and communications from the board of trade.[57] Shortly after was held at the Cockpit a meeting of which the record is endorsed: " Minutes taken at the Committee " all the members present are known to have been of the cabinet: the archbishop of Canterbury, the duke of Kent, the duke of Roxburghe, the earl of Sunderland, the earl of Berkeley—first lord of the admiralty, Viscount Stanhope—first lord of the treasury, and he who took the minutes—apparently Joseph Addison, secretary of state. Foreign and colonial matters, petitions, and business relating to the board of trade were dealt with.[58] At another meeting of " the Committee " at the Cockpit a fortnight later were present the archbishop, the dukes of Kent and Roxburghe, and the earl of Sunderland—secretary of state.[59] In October there was another meeting at the Cockpit: present, the archbishop, the duke of Roxburghe, the earl of Sunderland, the lord chancellor, and the writer of the minutes.[60]

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[52] *Dartmouth MSS., H.M.C.,* 13th report, iv. 495, 496.

[53] *Ibid.,* p. 496. The minutes of both these meetings were found in a bundle marked "Privy Council Minutes": *ibid.,* p. 495.

[54] S. P. D., George I, viii, 30 January 1716-17.

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[55] *Ibid.,* 23 February 1716-17.

[56] *Ibid.,* 27 February 1716-17.

[57] *Ibid.,* ix, 28 August 1717.

[58] S. P. D., George I, ix, 4 September 1717.

[59] *Ibid.,* 18 September 1717.

In March 1719 there is record of a meeting endorsed: " Committee of Councill, at the Cockpit ". It was attended by the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, the lord lieutenant of Ireland, the duke of Roxburghe, the earl of Berkeley, the earl of Sunderland—first lord of the treasury, the earl of Stanhope and Craggs—secretaries of state. They arranged the transport of troops to England, directing the admiralty to fit out more ships.[61]

Altogether " the committee of council ", composed of " the lords of the committee " appears as a body, limited in membership, containing the principal members of the privy council, the principal ministers of the king, who deal with his most important business. That " the lords of the committee " formed a committee of the privy council, the constant use of the term " committee of council " would seem to assure. Many contemporary allusions and remarks add corroboration. In 1702 Nottingham, secretary of state, wrote to the lord keeper, asking for suggestions concerning what should be said to the judges about to go out on circuit. He added: " if y$^{r}$ Ldp . . . can be at leisure to Come to the Committe att my Office to morrow morning these things may be adjusted preparatory to the meeting of the great Councill ".[62] In 1705 Secretary Hedges wrote to the lord president: " Her Ma$^{ie}$ has been pleased to appoint a Com$^{ee}$ of Lords to attend her at S$^{t}$ James's to morrow night at 6. a clock and would have your Lordsp put off the Gen$^{ll}$ Council to some other day as y$^{r}$ Lordship think fitt ".[63]

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[60] S. P. D., George I, x, 23 October 1717.

[61] *Ibid.*, xv, 13 March 1718-19.

[62] S. P. D. E. B., civ, 6 July 1702.

[63] *Ibid.*, cv, 7 February 1704-5.

Furthermore, though the lords of the committee are distinguished clearly by limitation of membership to the principal ministers and advisers of the crown and by the importance of the business attended to generally by them, none the less there is from time to time evidence that they, like other committees of the council then, might regard themselves as forming a committee of the whole privy council, and act then accordingly. In March 1694 Shrewsbury records a meeting which he calls "Committee", attended by William and ten, at Kensington. Here a letter from the admiralty concerning the commissioners of the sick and the wounded being read, the lords of the admiralty were directed to make a full and distinct report of the whole matter. Three weeks later at Kensington, the king and twelve being present, "The Lords of the Ad delivered their report upon the Com of Sick and Wounded, and upon the petition of the Com they are ordered to be heard at a Committee, when the whole Council are to be summoned." In October, at another meeting at Kensington, present the king and nine: "The representation from the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded to be sent to the Council".[64] In April 1696 Shrewsbury gives minutes of a meeting, described as "the Committee", held at Kensington, with the king and eight others. It was, he says, "turned into a Council", and certain privy council business dispatched.[65] By the end of the seventeenth century committees had become, in theory at least, almost entirely committees of the whole council. While "the committee" was in practice limited in membership to include only the most important and trusted counsellors of the crown, yet there was no reason why they should not regard themselves as a committee of the whole council whenever they wished. That would probably be desirable when "the lords of the committee" wished to act as a privy council for formal completion of council business or issuing of council orders. Such procedure did not mark anything unusual in appearance. The privy council was large, and "the committee of council" much smaller, but often there were meetings of the privy council no larger than meetings of "the committee". In 1713, for example, there were many councils attended by six, seven, or eight members only.[66]

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[64] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 61, 62, 242.

[65] *Ibid.,* p. 324.

It is impossible to say how far the character of a committee of the privy council continued to be ascribed to "the lords of the committee". It may have been, in theory, because any group of privy councillors doing business that was or had been within the cognizance of the council were thought of as a committee of the council in the sense that any or all of the privy councillors so acting might be considered a committee of the whole privy council. It may also have been regarded—and on the whole this would seem to have been the case—as an indefinite or informal continuation of the committee of the council for foreign affairs, which had for so long dealt with the principal council business, and was finally known as "the committee". Such a committee had not been formally established since 1679, but, so far as the records show, it was never abolished, nor is there any evidence that it was suffered to lapse. In 1694 a certain one noted with respect to a case between the earl marshal and the lord chamberlain about a question of ceremonial and procedure: "After an hours arguing: the King ordered it to be referrd to a Committee of the C., first great officers [*the two words preceding interlined above*] of the Councill; to examine Presidences & Report." [67]

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[66] P. C. R., lxxxiv.

[67] Edward Southwell, Privy Council Notes: Add. MS. 34350, fo. 11.

For the most part minutes of meetings of "the lords of the committee" or "the committee of council" occur too infrequently for any certain conclusion to be drawn about how often such meetings were held. Allusions in the correspondence of the secretaries and in other miscellaneous sources also, while far more numerous, are on the whole fortuitous and hence inadequate in this respect. From incidental references it would seem that at times the committee of principal members of the council was expected to meet regularly once a week. It may be that frequently this was not observed. On the other hand it is evident that other meetings were held whenever the sovereign or the lords of the committee wished, and as often as business required. From the minutes taken by Shrewsbury, supposing that the ones not specifically endorsed refer to "the committee", as most probably they do, it would appear that the committee often met on days when the privy council did not assemble, the council often meeting the day before or after the committee.

In 1702 Secretary Hedges wrote to the lord privy seal:[68]

> Her Maj$^{ty}$ thinks it for her Service that my Lords of the Com$^{ee}$ of Councill will be pleased to meet at the E: of Nottingham's Office as often as they think fitt, and as there shall be Occasion and tho' they cannot be attended with a Secry of State, the Intelligence from abroad and particularly from the Fleet, will be laid before your Lordships for your Consideration and M$^{r}$ Ellis and M$^{r}$ Warr [under-secretaries] will be ready to receive your Lordships Directions, there is nothing Materiall at present, and therefore I desire your Lordship when there is to Communicate this to the rest of the Lords, I do not now address to them all, because I would avoid giving a Needless occasion for a Meeting . . .

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[68] Letter from Bath, 6 September 1702: S.P.D.E.B., ci. 236.

In 1718 Secretary Craggs wrote to the archbishop of Canterbury:

> The Lords of the Committee of Council having found a great Arrear of business depending, and being desirous to bring their meetings into a Regular Method, I take leave to give Your Grace notice, that they have agreed there shall be a Committee at the Cockpit every Wednesday at Eleven in the Morning, and whereas the business has often remained unsettled, by Reason of the Lords not attending, I humbly beg Your Grace will please to be punctual at the Hour, and attend every Wednesday at Eleven a Clock exactly.

There is a marginal endorsement: "about the meeting of the Committee at the Cockpit".[69]

For the most part the student merely chances upon notices of meetings of the committee: what he finds may be regular times of meeting or announcements of extraordinary meetings which members are being bidden to attend. In 1690 Mary wrote that Marlborough desired her to propose a matter "this morning at the committee".[70] Shortly after, with respect to the command of the fleet: "I sent to lord Nottingham to have the committee appointed to-morrow morning extraordinary upon this".[71] In 1693 Nottingham, secretary of state, asked a certain one to attend the next afternoon at his office, "a Committee of Councill being appointed to meete here at that time".[72] A little later one of the under-secretaries wrote that "a Committee of the Council" would meet the next morning at nine in the earl of Nottingham's office.[73] About

[69] Letter of 14 April 1718: *ibid.*, cxix, 14 April 1718.

[70] Letter to William, 10/20 July 1690: Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, etc. (London, 1773), ii, part iii. 138.

[71] Mary to William, 22 July/1 August 1690: *ibid.*, p. 146.

[72] Letter to Sir John Houblon, 16 March 1692-3: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii.

[73] *Ibid.*, cxlvi, 2 May 1693.

this time there are minutes of "the Committee of the Councill", "the Committee of Councill", or "the Committee", 12 May, 20, 30 June, 21 July, 8 September, 9 November.[74]

In 1695 the duke of Shrewsbury, secretary of state, wrote to the lord deputy that the king had directed the deputy's letter to be laid before him "the first time a Committee of Council waits upon him, which I think will be in a day or two." Next day at Kensington the lord deputy's letter was read.[75] In 1702 Sir Charles Hedges, one of the secretaries, wrote that there was to be "a meeting of some of the Lords of the Councill" to consider of matters relating to the fleet, the next morning at ten o'clock, in the office of the earl of Nottingham—the other secretary of state.[76] Somewhat later one of the under-secretaries wrote: "There is to be a Committee tuesday at ten in the morning, but the Lords know it, so that I beleeue there needs no Summons".[77] Shortly after he said he had received from Secretary Hedges a letter with an enclosure for "the Lords of the Committee of Councill", and that they had held a meeting the afternoon before.[78] Later on Hedges wrote that "the Lords of the Councill" having appointed to meet at the earl of Nottingham's office next morning at ten at the Cockpit, the presence of a certain one was desired.[79] This was not a privy council or even a committee of the whole council, most probably, for the register of the council records for that day only a meeting of the queen in a council of twenty-one at St. James's.[80]

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[74] *Ibid.*, ccv. 12, 26, 33, 42, 68, 83.

[75] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House*, ii, part i. 265, 266, 267.

[76] Letter to the duke of Ormonde, 12 May 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ci. 212.

[77] S. P. D., Anne, i, 2 August 1702.

[78] Richard Warre to the earl of Nottingham, Cockpit, 14 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 219.

[79] Letter to Viscount Thanon, Whitehall, 1 November 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ci. 259.

[80] P. C. R., lxxix, 2 November 1702.

In August 1703 Nottingham inquired of the prince's council in what state of preparedness was the squadron designed for Portugal, " that I may acquaint the Lords of the Comittee with it between 10 & 11 to morrow morning ".[81] Two days later he informed the commissioners of transport that " the Lords of the Committee " would meet the next morning at eleven o'clock.[82] The following May Hedges wrote to Lord Chief Justice Holt that the queen wished him to meet " the Lords of the Committee of Councill " the next Tuesday at a time convenient for him, between ten and two o'clock.[83] Shortly after he asked the commissioners of transport to give an account of progress in providing for the sea expedition to " the Lords of the Committee " who would meet on Friday morning.[84] In November of the next year he informed the commissioners of trade and plantations that the queen wished them to send an account of the present state of Barbados in time for him to lay it before " the Lords of the Committee of Councill " the next Friday morning.[85] In 1711 the earl of Dartmouth, secretary of state, wrote to the secretary at war, that " the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ " would meet the next day at the duke of Queensberry's office at eleven o'clock; that they wished the secretary at war to be there with " Estimates for Spain & Portugal ".[86] On the day following St. John, the other secretary, wrote of another meeting of " the Committee of Council " to be held the day after.[87] In February 1712 Dartmouth asked Sir Charles Hedges to be ready to give an opinion about a matter to

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[81] Letter of 18 August 1703: S. P. D. E. B., ccix. 81.

[82] *Ibid.*, fo. 84.

[83] *Ibid.*, cv, 7 May 1704.

[84] *Ibid.*, 17 April 1705.

[85] S. P. D. E. B., cv, 6 November 1706.

[86] Letter of 12 February 1710-11: *ibid.*, cx.

[87] Letter of 13 February 1710-11: *ibid.*, cix.

"the Lords of the Committee at their next meeting, of which notice shall be given You".[88]

It would seem, then, that meetings of the lords of the committee of the council were held at various times, as convenience or necessity dictated. Many were in the morning, some in the afternoon—on almost any day of the week at various times. It has already been noticed that many of them were held on Sunday, a day often used for meetings of the committee of foreign affairs and of the cabinet council. In 1693 Secretary Trenchard wrote to the commissioners of the navy: "The King commands me to acquaint you, that hee would have you attend him att the Committee att my Office on Sonday next att four in the afternoon, concerning the Instructions given by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty about paying in Course." [89]

Meetings of "the committee" were held in various places, where the king or the lords of the committee desired. Some were in the various palaces of the king, at St. James's, at Kensington, at Windsor. For the most part, however, it would appear that the principal lords of the council came together in their small group in the office of one of the secretaries of state, especially in that of the senior secretary for the time being. The headquarters of the secretary might be wherever the sovereign was holding his court, but regularly the secretaries, the under secretaries, and secretaries' clerks did their business at the Cockpit in Whitehall, which took its name from the old cockpit constructed there long before by Henry VIII.

About the end of the sixteenth century Stow wrote: [90]

> Then is the said *White Hall,* sometime belonging to *Hubert de Burgh,* Earle of *Kent,* and Iusticier of *Eng-*

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[88] Letter of 1 February 1711-12: *ibid.,* cxii.

[89] Letter of 9 November 1693: *ibid.,* ccv.

[90] John Stow, *The Survey of London,* etc. (London, 1633), p. 496, also ed. London, 1618, p. 481. Stow began this book in 1598.

> *land,* who gave it to the blacke Fryers in Oldboorne, as I have before noted, King *Henry* the 8. ordained it to be called an Honor, and builded there a sumptuous Gallerie, and a beautiful Gatehouse, thwart the high street, to S. Iames Parke. &c.
>
> In this Gallerie, the Princes, with their Nobilitie, use to stand, or sit, and at Windowes to behold all triumphant Iustings, and other Militarie Exercises.
>
> Beyond this Gallerie, on the left hand is the Garden or Orchard belonging to the said *White Hall.*
>
> On the right hand be divers faire Tennis Courts, Bowling Alleyes, and a Cocke-pit, all built by King *Henry* the eight: and then one other arched Gate, with a way over it, thwarting the street, frō the Kings Gardens to the said Parke.

A century later the "Cockpit", was the site of various rooms and buildings, and was well known in the annals of government business and public events. In 1691 Luttrell writes that on the birthday of the princess of Denmark, the queen, the prince, and the princess played publicly at cards "at the cockpitt", and afterwards danced country dances at Whitehall.[91] The Cockpit was long the place where most of the meetings of the committees of the council were held and where the various assistants of the secretaries did their work. Its site was in the place where stands the present Privy Council Office, and an underground storeroom in that building is still known traditionally as the Cockpit.

In June 1683 Sunderland, one of the secretaries of state, wrote to Sir Leoline Jenkins, the other, that the king, then at Windsor, approved of what "you and the Lords who Met at your office agreed on".[92] One who was examined by a committee of the house of lords after the Revolution testified that about 1683 he knew the lord privy seal, "as he has seen his Lordship, both in the Privy Council, and in that which sat at the Secretaries Office".[93] In 1684 one of the secretaries spoke of "My Lords th^t use to meet here at my Office".[94] A meeting of James II with ten of the most important members of his privy council in the earl of Sunderland's office is recorded in the register of the council in April 1685. This may have been a council, but more probably it was a committee of the council.[95]

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[91] Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714* (Oxford, 1857), ii. 172.

[92] Letter of 15 June 1683: S. P. D., Charles II, ccccxxv.

In December 1689 a certain one, along with others, was examined by a parliamentary committee concerning the quo warrantos and other things of the time of James II. "This Examinant saith, That he knows nothing of the Heads in the Order; save only, that several Lords met, in the Year 1687, in the Secretary's Office, and that several Times, about the regulating of Corporations; *videlicet*, the late Lord *Jefferies*, the Marquis *Powis*, the Earl of *Sunderland*, the Lord *Arundell of Warder*, the Earl of *Castlemain*, Sir *Nicholas Butler*, and Mr. *Petre*." [96]

Early in the reign of William and Mary the earl of Nottingham, one of the secretaries, sent a summons to attend "certain Lords of his Maj^ty Privy Councill at My Lord Shrewsbury's Office in Whitehall" on the following Friday afternoon.[97] In 1693 Nottingham wrote to the governor of the East India Company: "The Committee of Councill will meet at my Office to morrow at 4. a Clock in the afternoone, and from them I desire, that You and the Deputy Governor will attend here precisely at that time." [98] Somewhat later Secretary Trenchard wrote to the commissioners of the admiralty that the queen had directed "the Committee of the Councill" to meet at five o'clock the next afternoon in the earl of Nottingham's office.[99] On another occasion Trenchard declared that "a Comittee of the Councill" was to meet at the earl of Nottingham's office the next day, Monday, in the morning.[100] Again he wrote to the lords commissioners of the admiralty that William had directed "the Committee" to meet at five that afternoon at the earl of Nottingham's office: they to be there to give account what ships could be kept out all the next summer.[101]

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[93] *Lords' Journals*, xiv. 385.

[94] S. P. D. E. B., lxiv, 7 March 1683-4.

[95] P. C. R., lxxi, 12 April 1685.

[96] *Lords' Journals*, xiv. 388.

[97] Letter to Captain Minors, Whitehall, 20 September 1689: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 53.

[98] Letter of 16 March 1692-3: *ibid.*, fo. 628.

In 1694 the minutes of a meeting of a "Committee of Councill", taken probably by Trenchard, contain the note: "To summon the Committee to meet to morrow at the office in the evening." [102] In 1697 summons was ordered for "the Comittee of Council" and also the postmasters to meet at the duke of Shrewsbury's office the next evening at six o'clock.[103]

In 1702 "the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councell" desired the presence of the duke of Ormonde at the secretary's office the next morning at eleven o'clock.[104] A few days later Secretary Hedges wrote to the lord high admiral that "some of the Lords of the Councill" would meet to consider of matters relating to the fleet the next morning at the earl of Nottingham's office: they would be glad to have him attend.[105] In July Nottingham wrote to the lord keeper inviting him to come "to the Committe att my Office ".[106] A few days after Hedges asked the attorney general to attend the lords of the committee at Nottingham's office.[107] It was about this time that Secretary Hedges wrote to the lord privy seal that Anne believed it would be for her service if "my Lords of the Com$^{ee}$ of Councill" would meet at the earl of Nottingham's office as often as they saw fitt or as occasion suggested.[108] Later that year Nottingham wrote to the attorney general desiring his opinion in a matter, "and I now give you this notice of it, that you may be the better prepared on Monday next, when the Committee of Councill will meet at my Office at 10 in the morning".[109]

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[99] Letter of 5 July 1693: *ibid.*, ccv. 35.

[100] Letter to Sir Stephen Fox, Whitehall, 3 September 1693: *ibid.*, xcix. 137.

[101] Letter of 1 November 1693: *ibid.*, ccv. 81.

[102] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 11 February 1693-4.

[103] Secretary of state to John Ellis, 25 March 1696-7: Add. MS. 28895, fo. 76.

[104] Nottingham to the duke of Ormonde, Whitehall, 7 May 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ. 1.

[105] Letter of 12 May 1702: *ibid.*, cciv. 318.

In 1704 Hedges wrote to the commissioners for the exchange of prisoners that they were to attend "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" at his office.[110] A little later he asked the attorney general to attend "a Comm$^{ee}$ of the Lords of the Councill" at his office the next morning.[111] In 1705 Hedges wrote that "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" were to meet at his office the next Friday morning between ten and eleven: the members of the board of ordnance were asked to bring account of the progress they had made in providing for the earl of Peterborough's expedition.[112] In 1709 the earl of Sunderland, secretary of state, wrote that the lords of the committee of council would meet in the secretary's office: the members of the ordnance board were to examine a paper and attend the meeting.[113] Early in 1711 the earl of Dartmouth, secretary of state, asked the duke of Argyle to be present at the duke of Queensberry's office where

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[106] Letter of 6 July 1702: *ibid.,* civ.
[107] Letter of 14 July 1702: *ibid.,* ci. 224.
[108] Letter of 6 September 1702: *ibid.,* ci.
[109] Letter of 17 October 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ.
[110] Letter of 21 August 1704: *ibid.,* cv. 115.
[111] Letter of 22 December 1704: *ibid.,* fo. 164.
[112] Letter of 18 April 1705: *ibid.,* fos. 202, 203.
[113] Letter of 16 February 1708-9: *ibid.,* cviii.

"some Lords of the Councill" were to meet. The marginal endorsement in the secretary's letter book is: "to be at the Com$^{tee}$ of Council".[114] A little later Dartmouth informed the lords commissioners of trade and plantations that "the Lords of the Committee" desired to speak with them at the duke of Queensberry's office, about the recent disorders in the Leeward Islands.[115] In September St. John wrote to the queen that the "Lords of the Committee of Council" had met that morning at the Cockpit, and directed the two secretaries to confer with the agent representing France.[116]. During this year the committee of council met frequently in the morning at the office of the secretary of state.[117] In 1713 the commissioners of trade were sent for to come to "the Lords of the Committee of Council" at the Lord Bolingbroke's office, to confer about a treaty of commerce with France.[118] In 1715 Secretary Stanhope requested the directors of the South Sea Company to attend "the Committee of Lords" that was to meet at his office the next evening.[119] Next year the prince having been pleased to refer the arrest of Lord Archibald Hamilton to consideration of "the Lords of the Committee", they met at the Cockpit.[120]

Other meetings of the lords of the committee were held in other places. Minutes of 1694 contain the memorandum: "To summon the Committee of Councill to meet at my Ld Keepers house on Monday morning at nine." [121] According to the notes of Shrewsbury some of the meetings of the "Committee of Council" that year were held at Kensington.[122] In July 1702 Anne commanded the commissioners of the board of trade to attend her "at the Committee at St James" the next day.[123] In 1704 Hedges wrote to Lord Chief Justice Holt: "I am commanded to acquaint Your Lordship, that the Lords of the Committee of Councell attend her Maty to morrow at Six a Clock in the evening in the Councill Chamber at St James's": he was to come.[124] Shortly after Hedges wrote to the principal officers of the ordnance that "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" had appointed a meeting at the Secretary's house the next morning: he required an estimate to lay before them, since they wished to know what would be the cost of firearms, bayonets, and soldiers' tents.[125] In 1707 Sunderland wrote to St. John: "I am commanded by Her Maty to signify Her Pleasure, that you attend next Sunday night the Committee of Council at Windsor, and bring with you an account of the Troops which are designed to be embarkt for Portugal and Spain this Summer".[126] In 1710 Sunderland wrote "a Committee of Council" was to meet at the great council chamber in the Cockpit the next day upon business relating to North Britain.[127]

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[114] Letter of 9 February 1710-11: *ibid.*, cx.

[115] C. O. 391, xxii, 19 March 1710-11.

[116] Letter of 20 September 1711: S. P. D., Anne, xvi; Bolingbroke, *Letters*, i. 367.

[117] S. P. D. E. B., cxii, cxiii.

[118] C. O. 391, xxiv, 18 December 1713.

[119] S. P. D. E. B., cxvii, 17 March 1714-15.

[120] Methuen to Stanhope, 27 November 1716: *ibid.*, cclxvii.

[121] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 4 March 1693-4.

The sovereign was frequently present at meetings of "the committee" or of "the lords of the committee" of the council. Accordingly, as will be shown, a difference sometimes assumed to distinguish cabinet from "the committee" does not always hold. Charles II was present in 1682 at the meeting of which the extended minutes are endorsed "Proceedings of the Com̄ittee of Council".[128]

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[122] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 61, 63.

[123] C. O. 391, xv, 1 July 1702.

[124] Letter of 29 April 1704: S. P. D. E. B., cv.

[125] Letter of 5 July 1704: *ibid.,* fo. 88.

[126] Letter of 22 July 1707: S. P. D. E. B., cvi.

[127] Letter to the earl of Seafield, 24 February 1709-10: *ibid.,* cviii.

[128] Shaftesbury Papers, 6B, no. 445.

In the following year there was a meeting of principal councillors to examine John Rous. The memorandum is merely endorsed " Before His Ma$^{ty}$ ", so that its character cannot be positively known, but that it was what had been previously called the committee of foreign affairs is very probable since those who attended were the duke of York, the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, the duke of Ormonde, the earl of Sunderland, the earl of Rochester, and Secretary Jenkins.[129] During that year there were various small meetings at many of which the king was present. The extant records are endorsed simply " Minutes ", or "At a meeting ".[130]

In 1690 during William's first absence from England after he came to the crown, at a time when Mary was acting as sovereign in his stead, Nottingham, secretary of state, wrote to a correspondent: " I haue represented to the Queen at the Com̄ittee what you writt to me ".[131] A few days later Mary wrote to William that the privy council had been called for extraordinary meeting, " but seeing you had left me to the advice of the committee when to go, I ask'd them in the morning if they thought it necessary . . . lord president said, No: and none else said a word." [132] In 1693 Secretary Trenchard informed the admirals of the fleet that he had received their communication and laid it before the queen at " the Committee of the Councill ": she had given orders for the fleet to sail within eight days.[133] Shortly after he wrote to the commissioners of the admiralty that the queen had just been moved " at the Committee of Council " about a petition, which she had granted.[184] In October "the Queen at the Committee" listened to information that concerned obstructing execution of a sentence of court martial, and gave order thereupon.[135]

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[129] S. P. D., Charles II, ccccxxvii, 5 July 1683.

[130] *Ibid.*, ccccxxxi, ccccxxxii.

[131] Letter to Sir Robert Holmes, Whitehall, 8 July 1690: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 117.

[132] Letter of 10/20 July 1690: Dalrymple, ii, part iii. 136.

[133] Letter of May 1693: S. P. D. E. B., ccv. 11.

William was frequently present at meetings of the "Committee of Council" when present in England. In June 1693 Nottingham wrote to the lord lieutenant of Ireland that the articles of Waterford had been considered by the king "at the Committee of Councill" and that a letter of the lord lieutenant had been read to William "at the Committee".[136] In 1694, 1695, and 1696 William was present at many of the meetings of principal councillors recorded by Trenchard, by Shrewsbury, and by others. "I have received your letter of Dec. the 2nd", Shrewsbury wrote to Sir George Rooke early in 1696, "and at a Committee of the Council laid it before his Majesty".[137]

In 1702 Secretary Hedges wrote that he had laid some communications from one of the diplomatic agents before the queen "& a Com$^{\text{tee}}$ of the Councill".[138] In September, at a time when Anne and some of her principal councillors were at Bath, Hedges wrote that one of Methuen's letters had been presented to the queen "in the Committee of Councill here". "The Lords of the Committee" in London—the divided privy councils of James I and of earlier times may be recalled—were to consider whether the imperial ambassador in London ought not to be urged to try to secure assistance from Portugal.[139] A little later, when the ambassador, Count Wratislaw, had written a letter of

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[134] Letter of 9 June 1693: *ibid.*, cciv. 77.

[135] Nottingham to Captain Harrys, 3 October 1693: *ibid.*, xcviii.

[136] Letter of 10 June 1693: Public Record Office, State Papers, Ireland, Entry Books, i. 465.

[137] Letter of 6 January 1695-6: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part I. 287.

[138] Letter to Mr. Stepney, 12 May 1702: S. P. F. E. B., cc. 220.

[139] Letter of 11 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 202.

complaint, Anne appointed " the Lords of the Committee to attend Her to morrow about 12 a clock, and then this letter of the Count's will be read ".[140] Early the next year Hedges wrote to the ambassador at Vienna that he had read his letter " to the Queen at the Com$^{ee}$ of Council, and her Ma$^{te}$ as well as the Lords is very well satisfied with it ".[141]

In July 1703 Secretary Nottingham informed the principal officers of the ordnance that he had communicated their recent letter " to the Queen at the Committee " : they were to satisfy the Portuguese envoy with respect to the arms for which he asked, this not to be a precedent for the future.[142] In December he wrote that a letter had been laid before the queen " at the Committee ".[143] A little later Hedges, the other secretary, told Sir George Rooke, that his letter of the day before had been " laid before the Queen, at a Committee of Councill to night " : the queen had commanded the enclosed orders to be sent him.[144]

In 1704 Hedges wrote to Lord Chief Justice Holt:[145]

> I am commanded to acquaint your Lordship, that the Lords of the Committee of Councell attend Her Ma$^{ty}$ to morrow at Six a Clock in the evening in the Councill Chamber at S$^{t}$ James's, at which time and place it will be proper for Your Lordship to give the Account of Baird's Lynsey's Tryall.

Again he wrote to Rooke that several advices from Italy and from France " have been layd before Her Ma$^{ty}$ in a Committee of Councill ".[146] On another occasion he informed the lord high treasurer that a petition had been read "to the Queen in the Committee of Councill": her majesty wished the treasurer to give the petitioner some small position.[147] In January 1708 Anne attended a committee of council held in the evening, to consider whether or not papers demanded by the house of lords should be submitted by the secretary of state.[148]

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[140] J. Tucker to John Ellis, Bath, 23 September 1702: Add. MS. 28889, fo. 279.

[141] Letter to George Stepney, Whitehall, 12 February 1702-3: S. P. F. E. B., cc. 424.

[142] Letter of 27 July 1703: S. P. D. E. B., ccix. 73.

[143] Letter to Colonel Gibson, 17 December 1703: *ibid.*, civ. 385.

[144] Letter from Windsor, 28 December 1703: *ibid.*, ccviii. 108.

[145] Letter of 29 April 1704: S. P. D. E. B., cv. 61.

[146] Letter from the Cockpit, 20 June 1704: *ibid.*, ccviii. 161.

What was done by the lords of the committee when the sovereign was not present, like what was afterwards done in the cabinet council when he was absent, was reported to the sovereign for approval and consent. In 1703 Godolphin wrote to Nottingham: "I have had the honour this morning to read to the Queen your lord$^{ps}$ letters of the 2$^{d}$ & 3$^{d}$ instant; Her Ma$^{tie}$ approves very well of the orders given by the lords of the Com̄ittee, relating to Holland and Portugall." [149] About this time one of the under secretaries made memorandum that he had sent to Secretary Hedges a copy of the three minutes entered on the foregoing page of the secretary's letter book, "with the Reasons as in these minutes, to be submitted to the Queen." [150] In 1711 St. John reported to Anne what had been done in the committee.[151] On another occasion he wrote: "There can be no room to doubt of the Queen's approbation of this minute of the Committee of council, since it is agreeable to all her declarations." [152] In 1713 Bolingbroke wrote to the queen with respect to business at a committee of council: "The few things which relate to my province, and were to-day dispatched, are minuted for your Majesty's orders." [153]

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[147] Letter from the Cockpit, 28 July 1704: *ibid.*, cv. 106.

[148] Sunderland to St. John, Whitehall, 11 January 1707-8: *ibid.*, cvi.

[149] Letter from Windsor, 4 August 1703: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 76.

[150] S.P.D.E.B., cxlvi, 30 September 1703.

[151] Letter of 20 September 1711: *Letters,* i. 367.

[152] Letter to the earl of Strafford, Whitehall, 23 November 1711: *ibid.*, ii. 8.

[153] Letter of 20 September 1713: *ibid.*, iv. 294.

Minutes of the meetings of "the committee of council" may have been taken regularly, but no long sequence of them has survived. They were not registered, like the minutes of privy council meetings by subordinate employees and kept in a permanent record, but appear to have been written down by some of the members present, who wished to have them or were willing to make them. Most of those that survive seem to have been written by various secretaries of state. Even so there is no collection of them written together in one or more volumes, as had once been made of minutes of the committee of foreign affairs, and as had afterwards been done for a shorter time in respect of the committee of intelligence. Minutes of "the committee" or "committee of council" occur as loose sheets among papers of successive secretaries of state, or at random elsewhere; while a great part of the information about the group must be gleaned from the letter books of secretaries and from other correspondence containing allusions to the meetings. It might accordingly be expected that in the various collections of these minutes many appear to be missing, and that he who took the memoranda was apt to omit what lacked interest for him. In 1694 Shrewsbury gives many minutes of meetings which the other secretary, Trenchard, does not give.[154] The minutes of a meeting of the king and nine at Kensington in March that year taken by Shrewsbury are entirely different from the minutes of the same meeting by Trenchard.[155]

Constantly is the student impeded because of difficulties arising from absence of endorsement or of description on minutes of meetings, in which case the nature of the body in question must be determined, after preliminary distinctions have been established, from the nature of the business dealt with. Many unendorsed minutes must be put aside from investigation because the nature of the business recorded in them does not afford any certain distinction between "the committee"—a small body of the principal councillors—and the committee of the whole privy council or any of the particular committees that were merging into it. Sometimes the endorsement itself is not sufficient for certain distinction. In 1711 memoranda of a meeting at which was conducted an examination about a suspect is endorsed: "Minutes taken at a Committee of Council Aug. 3. 1711".[156] This may or may not have been the committee that acted like the "cabinet council". Next year "Minutes taken att the Committee of Council June 29th 1712 & approv'd by her Majesty", relating to troops in Portugal, probably concerns the body that had formerly been called the committee of foreign affairs.[157] In 1719 of two papers written in different hands one is endorsed "Min." and "Cockpit", and concerns nine who were present; the other endorsed "Min." and "Committee of Councill, at the Cockpit" gives ten as present. These minutes record different matters, but refer to the same day, and both relate one thing in common. They are probably two reports of the same meeting, though possibly two meetings of "the committee" were held in the Cockpit about the same time.[158]

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[154] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i: S. P. D., William and Mary, v.

[155] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 61: S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 18 March 1693-4.

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[156] S. P. D., Anne, xvi, 3 August 1711.

[157] *Ibid.*, xix, 8 July 1712.

[158] S. P. D., George I, xv, 13 March 1718-19.

# CHAPTER VIII

## WORK OF THE LORDS OF "THE COMMITTEE"

THE work of the lords of the committee of council was, like that of the "committee of foreign affairs" and that of the "cabinet council", miscellaneous and manifold. The lords of the committee dealt with the important matters that affected the realm, but they were also concerned, as seemed well to the sovereign or to themselves, with a great variety of matters. Sometimes they gave counsel with respect to things of highest moment at the time. They were often busied with foreign affairs. They dealt with many matters respecting parliament. They supervised admiralty, naval, war, and ordnance administration. Often they concerned themselves with local matters. They considered petitions; arranged proclamations; and determined a variety of orders.

In January 1682 there were on successive days two meetings of the principal councillors of Charles II in his presence, to consider foreign relations and domestic affairs in connection with a vigorous policy towards France, which Charles for the moment proposed. An extant account of these gatherings gives an idea not only of the business brought forward but of the opinions of councillors present.

Lord Hyde—first commissioner of the treasury—hoped the king would provide for his security and defence before having Lord Preston—the English ambassador to France—present so bold a demand. If the king lacked money for the probable great expenses in a war, he might be forced to dishonorable peace. Accordingly Hyde prayed that action be postponed until "wee have united his

Royall high$^{s}$ to the Parliam$^{t}$ and gett money to maintaine that which requires so vast a Charge."

Viscount Halifax told the king he might be sure of getting the money when they were engaged against an enemy so much abhorred; if they were not engaged before parliament sat, parliament would advance no money for any design; if his royal highness had command in such a war he could unite the people again; if the king of France were let alone he would shortly grow very dangerous to the English government and to English trade. Let the king take this step, and "wee may safely have a Parl$^{t}$ and just before they meet, secure Shaftesbury". Then Monmouth could effect nothing. He hoped the duke of York would be compliant; "then wee tramble all those little pretenders in peeces".

Lord Clarendon was glad to see them so vigorous and earnest. But first make an engagement with the Dutch; then inform the German courts of their design to lessen the French monarch's power. They should also try to end factions at home, secure Shaftesbury, banish those at court suspected of being corrupted by the Franch ambassador, have that ambassador removed, "then gett a Parl$^{t}$ and give a fair account of things, that the sincerity thereof may not be questioned". Parliament should be told of the king's necessities for money for a war against the common enemy. He believed that parliament would not refuse.

Secretary Jenkins said: "I am sorry to see you run into so many divisions of affaires when his Ma$^{tie}$ requested your advice only as to the sending away my L$^{d}$ Preston to ffrance". The king had commanded Jenkins to learn their opinions about that alone. They must remember it would be a great prince whom they would engage—as had been suggested, well provided with money and with armies. Giving high command to his royal highness would by itself entail no success: men and money would be needed. Then Conway, the other secretary, declared that Charles wished them to meet again at four o'clock—probably the next day.

Charles opened the meeting that followed with an address:

> My Lords I haue some questions to putt to you for the remedy of the ills that might happen if done without your advise, I have sent for you to lett you know
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> 1. that I am agoing to send positively to demand Restitution from the ffrench king of the late conquests he hath made in the Spanish Netherlands and Germany.
> 2. to make an Agreem$^{t}$ and Peace with Holland
> 3. to make a Peace with the Emp$^{r}$ of Marocco
> 4. to lessen the Charge at Tangier.
>
> Upon these 4 things I desire your advice and till I receive it I have stayed my Envoyes to Holland and ffrance.

In discussion ensuing the lord chancellor—earl of Nottingham—approved the demands upon the king of France, though advising delay until it was known how Charles was provided with money and other necessaries. He thought such a design would satisfy the people. Agreement with Holland and with other neighbors was necessary. Peace with Morocco he approved: trade and customs would increase.

Mr. Seymour thought that if the king could raise a force answerable to the design it would be as noble as great. But first make sure of the treaties. Lessen the charge at Tangier and make a peace: "then look at home to a Parl$^{t}$ that is my opinion". Secretary Jenkins thought it not well that Lord Preston be sent until the king had done as Seymour and the chancellor advised. The lord president—earl of Radnor—interrupted: he thought the king should have an account of the situation with respect to the Dutch. Until then put aside the debate and consider raising money for domestic concerns. The lord chamberlain—earl of Mulgrave—said that there should first be accord with other princes and states concerned, they engaging themselves to take equal share of the burden. Otherwise the king would obtain no money from parliament, since the war would be thought apt to impoverish England for Germany, Holland and Spain. Lord Hyde said they must deal cunningly with cunning men. England's neighbors must covenant not singly to make peace and equally to bear the charges of the war. So he had hopes that parliament would give the supplies.

Charles gave them hearty thanks for their counsel. In accord with their advice he ordered the secretary to postpone sending the despatch; to communicate the king's resolution to the English representative in France; let the commissioners appointed to treat with the ambassadors from Morocco quickly draw up articles of peace; an envoy was to be sent to Holland at once; the secretary was to try to have the French ambassador removed, on the following Wednesday he to give account of what he had done in respect of these orders.[1] Save for abandoning Tangier, how little came of the proposals here discussed is well known.

In April 1694 there was a meeting of the "Committee of Councill" attended by twelve in the presence of William. It was arranged that "the Committee" was to meet again and consider Irish affairs. Two petitions were referred to the lords justices of Ireland. Order to be given to put the fleet on short allowance when the ships sailed from the Downs. Representatives of the Turkey Company desired that their ships at Gibraltar might proceed: an order to be given granting them leave to send on five or six towards the end of September. Inquiry to be made why money was being levied upon merchants in Turkey. A petition referred to the admiralty. Another was considered; the king disposed to grant it, but would wait.[2] From notes by Shrewsbury about this meeting one learns that it was held at Kensington. Shrewsbury records the presence of the lord chancellor and not of the lord chamberlain as given in the other minutes. He records also other business dealt with. The Dutch ambassador's letter was read and delivered to Shrewsbury, who was ordered to see that the admiralty released various ones if they were detained. The Swedish secretary's memorandum was read: Shrewsbury to speak with him. The secretary represented from the commissioners of the post office that there were many privateers between the Dutch coast and Harwich, so that the packet boat could not pass; nothing done. The lords of the admiralty delivered a report about the commissioners of the sick and wounded: to be heard at a committee of the whole privy council.[3]

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[1] "Proceedings of the Comittee of Council," 21 and 22 January 1681-2: Shaftesbury Papers, 6$^B$, no. 445.

In March 1696 William with eight of the principal councillors held at Kensington a meeting which Shrewsbury alluded to as "the Com of Council".[4] There it was decided that the parliament of Ireland should be adjourned to about the end of June. Sir Charles Hedges to be consulted about some business. The lord keeper to suspend an examination until further instructions. A bill drawn upon Shrewsbury was to be sent to the treasury. The king agreed that the Portuguese envoy should settle a matter. A proposal from the admiralty about fortifying Plymouth: the king himself would send engineers, and would speak with them himself. Admiral

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[2] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 15 April 1694.

[3] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 62, 63.

[4] Letter to Admiral Russell, 8 March 1696: *ibid.*, p. 313.

Russell allowed to return to town at once. Yachts and a convoy were ordered for the Venetian ambassadors.[5]

In June 1717 a list of papers "to be laid before the Lords of the Committee" concerned a petition of Portuguese merchants: a report of the board of trade about suppressing pirates in the West Indies; a report of the board of trade about patents for Spanish consuls in Minorca and Gibraltar; a petition from a Spaniard about a ship taken as prize; a petition about the receiver general of Jamaica with a report of the board of trade in his favor; a letter from the board of general officers; a letter about English sailors made captive by the Turks.[6]

In October there was a meeting at the Cockpit attended by the archbishop of Canterbury, the lord chancellor, the duke of Roxburghe—secretary of state for Scotland, the earl of Sunderland—secretary of state, the earl of Berkeley—first lord of the admiralty, and Lord Chief Justice Parker. The "Minutes at the Committee" denote that a communication from Lord Stair—ambassador to France—was considered; matters relating to Algiers were dealt with; permission was granted for one to read and copy his papers; a petition was rejected, and another referred; a letter was ordered sent to the envoy of Modena.[7]

Among the most important tasks of the lords of the committee was handling of foreign affairs, though the king continued to guard that part of his prerogative more jealously and successfully than almost any other. It is well known that though Charles II, like Charles I, instituted a standing committee of the council for foreign affairs, he frequently reserved the most important of them to himself or else communicated them only to a few most intimate confidants, outside of any committee. This was also the case with William, one of the most active diplomats of his age. It was less the case under Anne, and thereafter the principal ministers continued to get more and more control of diplomacy and foreign relations.

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[5] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 312, 313.

[6] S. P. D., George I, ix, 9 June 1717.

[7] *Ibid.,* x, 4, 16 October 1717.

In 1689 Secretary Nottingham wrote to one of the English representatives: "I have sent you by an Expresse y$^{r}$ originall Powers to conclude the Treatys of Allyance & Com̄erce w$^{ch}$ I had done sooner but th$^{t}$ I hop'd to have sent you at the same time a Project for th$^{t}$ of Com̄erce, but the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ have had so many affairs th$^{t}$ they have not bin able to perfect it but I will endeavour to gett it dispatcht".[8] In 1694 Secretary Trenchard informed the lords commissioners of the treasury that communications from abroad had been presented to the king "att a Committee of Councill".[9]

In 1702 Secretary Hedges wrote to the commissioners of trade that the Dutch ambassadors were pressing for dispatch of the treaties sent to the commissioners for their consideration. Accordingly, "the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill" desired their opinion at a meeting the next morning.[10] Somewhat later he informed the lord privy seal that the committee was to consider foreign matters among other things.[11] Again he wrote with respect to Stepney, the English ambassador at Vienna: "I have sent his Lr̄es to the Earl of Nottingham, to be laid before my Lords of the Com$^{ee}$".[12] Next year one of the under-secretaries wrote to another that his master wished him to wait upon Lord Nottingham and ask whether the treaty with Sweden had been laid before "the Lords of the Committee", so that duke of Marlborough might be informed if any new directions were needed.[13] Somewhat later Hedges wrote to Sir George Rooke that letters of his along with copies of his correspondence with Count Wratislaw—the imperial ambassador—had been laid before "the Lords of the Com$^{\text{tee}}$": they agreed with him.[14] In 1705 Godolphin wrote to Harley that Secretary Hedges would inform him what the queen wished him to communicate to "the Lords of the Committee" the next day about directing the earl of Sunderland to speak to the pensioner.[15] Next year a letter of Methuen, proposing assistance for the Vaduois was considered at the committee of council.[16]

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[8] Letter to Mr. Molesworth, Whitehall, 3 December 1689: S. P. F. E. B. ii.

[9] Letter of 5 March 1693-4: S. P. D. E. B., xcix. 162.

[10] Letter of 24 June 1702: *ibid.*, ci. 220.

[11] Letter of 6 September 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ci.

[12] Hedges to Godolphin, 29 September 1702: *ibid.*

In April 1711 "the Lords at the Committee" thought that the queen should try to get from the king of Spain assurances that he would make good the treaties between the emperor and the duke of Savoy as soon as he himself became emperor.[17] In September the lords of the committee met in the Cockpit to consider terms of peace with France.[18] "My Lord Treasurer mov'd, and all my Lords were of the same opinion, that M$^{\text{r}}$ Prior should be added to those who are empowr'd to sign", the secretary wrote with respect to the preliminaries of the Treaty of Utrecht.[19] In October Buys, pensionary of Amsterdam, came to England for the Dutch to treat about preliminaries of peace. He had audience with Anne at

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[13] John Tucker to John Ellis, Bath, 27 August 1703: Add. MS. 28890, fo. 393.

[14] Letter of 12 November 1703: S. P. D. E. B., cciv. 389.

[15] Letter of 25 June 1705: *H. M. C., Bath MSS.,* i. 71.

[16] Hedges to the archbishop [of Canterbury?], 14 August 1706: S. P. D. E. B., cv.

[17] Dartmouth to Harley, 30 April 1711: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.,* 15th report, iv. 682.

[18] Letter of St. John to the queen, Whitehall, 20 September 1711: S. P. D., Anne, xvi; Bolingbroke, *Letters,* i. 367.

[19] *Ibid.*

Windsor. She told him that her ministers would confer with him, and report to her, upon which she would give him her answer. According to appointment he met "the Lords at the Cockpit". After a long conference answer was later on given to him by the queen's command "at a conference with the Lords of the Council". St. John, who gives this account, speaks of the meetings as "the conferences which he [Buys] had with the Queen's ministers."[20] In November he wrote: "There has been a conference this morning, at the cockpit, with Monsieur Buys". He speaks of the opinion of "the Lords", and declares that "there can be no room to doubt of the Queen's approbation of this minute of the Committee of Council".[21] Some years afterwards Swift wrote of the conference which Buys had had with "a committee of council", "the lords of the committee", and "the lords of the council".[22] In 1715 one of the articles of the impeachment of the earl of Oxford declared that at "a Committee of Council" assurances had been given in the queen's name to Buys, of the constant good will of the queen towards the states.[23]

In 1712 St. John wrote:[24]

> The whole event of our treaty turning on this article of the reunion, I should not think our affairs in a very good situation, had I not reason to believe that the Treasurer knows, that this expedient, or something very near to it, will be closed with by the French Court. I may tell you, in the utmost confidence, that the first hint was given by him, in the Committee of

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[20] Bolingbroke, *Letters,* i. 425-445.

[21] *Ibid.,* ii. 6, 7, 8.

[22] Swift, *History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, Prose Works* (ed. T. Scott, London, 1907-8), x. 74, 75, 136.

[23] *Commons' Journals,* xviii. 210.

[24] Letter to the earl of Strafford, Whitehall, 29 April 1712: Bolingbroke, *Letters,* ii. 299, 300.

> Council, and, by several expressions which dropped from him, when alterations were started, I could plainly find, that he knew what would be most, and what least agreeable at Versailles.

In November a certain one replying to various questions said that the French emissary had been "in the conference with the Lords"; that he had made various proposals; that "the Lds of the Council seem'd dispos'd to comply therewith & my Ld. Bolingbroke says he understands the Queen to be of the same mind"; that "my Ld believes the Committee of Council must be again consulted".[25] Next year Bolingbroke wrote to Anne that "the Committee of Council" had just held a long meeting in which it had completed examination of the whole state of northern affairs. The day following he said, "my Lords" would consider the state of Minorca and business depending with the court of Spain.[26] In 1714 the committee considered the ceremony proper in proclaiming peace with Spain.[27]

In 1714 the draft of a letter from the South Sea Company to a Spanish representative was approved of "in the Committee of Council".[28] Three years later "a Committee of Council" was to meet at the Cockpit to conclude a treaty with the duke of Wolffenbüttel.[29] In 1719 a "Committee of Council at the Cockpit" attended by ten dealt with foreign matters.[30]

The lords of the committee of council dealt also with business that had to do with Ireland, with the lesser islands about England and Scotland, and with the plantations and colonial possessions. In 1692 the earl of Nottingham wrote to the chief justice, the attorney-general, and the solicitor general—of Ireland, all of them: "I send you here enclosed the Titles of certaine Bills, which the Lords of the Committee do think may be necessary to be passed into Acts of Parliament in Ireland": they were to consider and prepare heads for each of the said bills, among which were an act of recognition, an act concerning the militia, and an act of toleration for Protestant dissenters.[31] Somewhat later he wrote to the lord chancellor of Ireland that he had lately received from the lords justices of Ireland seven bills under the great seal of that kingdom, "which having been considered by the Lords of the Committee The Queen is pleased to approve these fiue of them".[32] In 1702 Secretary Hedges transmitted the answer of "the Lords of the Com^ee" to queries made by the commissioners of the revenue of Ireland to the lords justices there, about ships from France and from Spain.[33] In 1711 Dartmouth wrote to St. John: "The enclosed Answer to the Address of the Commons of Ireland has been agreed to at the Committee, if Her Ma^ty approves and signs it you'l be pleased to return it to me that I may send it to My Lord Lieutenant by next Saturday's Post."[34] Two years later Bolingbroke wrote to the lord treasurer that there would be absolute necessity of "a committee" the next Thursday, unless the treasurer objected to that day. The business of Ireland, he thought was pretty well settled.[35]

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[25] Hare to Lewis, 12 November 1712: S. P. D., Anne, xx.

[26] Letter of 20 September 1713: Bolingbroke, *Letters,* iv. 294.

[27] S. P. D. E. B., cxv, 18 February 1713-14.

[28] *Ibid.,* cxvii, 7 October 1714.

[29] Sunderland to the lord chancellor, Whitehall, 19 August 1717: S. P. D. E. B., cxx.

[30] S. P. D., George I, xv, 13 March 1718-19.

The smaller islands nearby sometimes claimed attention. In 1690 Nottingham wrote to the governor of the

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[31] S. P. D. E. B., xcviii, 9 March 1691-2.

[32] S. P., Ireland, Entry Books, i, 25 August 1692.

[33] Letter to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, 20 June 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ci.

[34] *Ibid.*, cxii, 2 August 1711.

[35] Letter from Windsor, 21 September 1713: *H. M. C., Portland MSS.*, v. 339.

Isle Wight that although care had formerly been taken for the safety of the island, yet "I haue represented to the Queen at the Com̄ittee what you writt to me now on this Subject that such further care may be taken as shall be thought necessary ".[36] In 1711 a letter from the lieutenant governor of Scilly about danger from the enemy was presented to "the Lords of the Committee of Councill ".[37]

The lords had something also to do with colonial business. In 1702 the committee of council directed the commissioners for trade and plantations to prepare drafts of commissions for governors of plantations and also drafts of instructions.[38] A little later a memorial of Governor Nicholson of Virginia requesting arms was read before the committee.[39] At the same time the committee called it to the attention of the admiralty and of the commissioners of trade and plantations that many despatches and the declaration of war had not yet been sent to the West Indies: they were to find some way of doing it.[40]

In June 1702 at a meeting of the board of trade: [41]

> Mʳ Penns Charge against Col: Quary . . . together with Colonel Quarys said Answer . . . were laid before the Board: And whilst their Lordships were reading the same a Message from the Lords of a Committee of Council met at the Earl of Nottinghams Office, requiring their Attendance in relation to some matters laid before them by Mʳ Penn, the Board attended accordingly . . . Their Lordships acquainted the Lords of the Committee with the many delays made by Mʳ Penn.

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[36] Letter to Sir Robert Holmes, 8 July 1690: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii.

[37] *Ibid.*, cxi, 20 July 1711.

[38] Nottingham to the lords commissioners, 5 June 1702: *ibid.*, civ.

[39] Nottingham to the earl of Romney, 9 June 1702: *ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] C. O. 391, xv, 26 June 1702.

Closely related at times was business connected with commerce and trade. In 1711 St. John wrote to the lords commissioners of trade that " the Lords of the Committee of Councill " would meet them the next Thursday to proceed in consideration of the trade to Africa.[42] At the meeting that followed the lord treasurer, the lord president, Secretary St. John, and Sir John Leake—first lord of the admiralty—attended. Members of the Royal African Company were present, and were questioned.[43] In 1717 the committee of council referred to the commissioners of trade letters from Cadiz about English trade.[44]

The lords of the committee dealt with business that had to do with parliament, management of parliament, and relations with it; they supervised the principal departments, such as admiralty, war, and treasury; and took part in many other domestic concerns.

In 1692 the marquis of Carmarthen wrote to William that Mary had allowed him to be absent for a fortnight, in which time " some of the Lords of the Comittee did write something of theire thoughts concerning the Parliament att theire next meeting ".[45] In November 1695 minutes taken by Shrewsbury of a meeting of what was doubtless the lords of the committee contain the note: " To have a Council of Trade established by Parliament, who would have leisure to mind that one business." [46] Apparently, in 1702 the committee helped prepare the queen's speech.[47] Later that year Hedges, writing from Bath, said that some of the country gentlemen disliked having parliament assemble as early as 8 October; he had written to the lord treasurer about how important it was for the members to meet in good humor; thereupon he had received orders to write to Lord Nottingham to "summon a meeting of my Lords of the Com^ee^ of Councill who are in and about Town" to consider the matter, and give their opinion about a postponement.[48]

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[42] S. P. D. E. B., cxi, 24 July 1711.

[43] C. O. 391, xxii, 26 July 1711.

[44] S. P. D. E. B., cxix, 30 April 1717.

[45] Letter of 9 September 1692: S. P. D., King William's Chest, xii. 127.

[46] 12 November 1695: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 255.

[47] Nottingham to the lord keeper, Whitehall, 6 July 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ.

With treasury officials there was business from time to time. At a meeting of the "Committee of Councill" in 1694 it was resolved "That the Queen giue directions to the Lords of the Treasury not to adjourn during 8 or 10 days".[49] Next year in a meeting of the king and nine at Kensington the lords present were ordered to meet with the lords of the treasury with respect to amending the coin, and endeavor, without altering the standard, to propose methods for effecting amendment, and to consider means of hindering or lessening exportation of coin.[50]

There was always much business in respect of admiralty and naval affairs. In July 1690 the commissioners of the admiralty desired that three or four hundred firearms be sent immediately to the yard at Chatham: this was approved by "the Lords of the Comittee".[51] In 1692 Nottingham wrote to the commissioners for victualling that the queen having appointed one to care for the provisions which the commissioners were to put aboard the transport ships attending the fleet about to depart, "the Lords of the Committee" thought it well for the commissioners from time to time to communicate to him their proceedings in the matter.[52] Next year Anne, at "the Committee of Councill" having received the petition of a ship master, commanded that he be allowed to sail on giving the security proposed.[53] In August Nottingham read a letter, about French privateers on the coast, to Anne " at the Committee of Council ".[54] About the same time a letter from the commissioners of the victualling, with respect to provisions which they had been ordered to put aboard transports, was read to the commissioners of the treasury. The treasury thereupon directed the victualling department to represent the matter to " the Comittee of the Councill att the Lord Nottinghams Office ", the treasury commissioners thinking it more proper that directions therein be had thence.[55] That summer " the Committee of the Council " inquired into the disaster befallen the Turkey Fleet, and it also investigated the victualling of the fleet.[56] In November the admiralty board and the navy board were directed to attend " the Committee ".[57] In February 1694 at a " Committee of Councill " among other business a matter was referred to the admiralty who were to report the opinion of the victuallers thereupon.[58]

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[48] Hedges to Lord Rochester, Bath, 2 September 1702: *ibid.*, ci. 232-4.

[49] S. P. D., Naval, iii. 31 July 1694.

[50] 16 October 1695: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House*, ii, part i. 242.

[51] S. P. D. E. B., xcviii, 9 July 1690.

[52] *Ibid.*, 12 April 1692.

[53] Secretary Trenchard to the commissioners of the admiralty, 9 June 1693: *ibid.*, cciv. 77.

Important naval decisions were made and orders resolved. At a meeting of the " Committee of Councill " in February 1694, at which were present the king and nine, it was decided: [59]

> That the Rendevous of the ships designed for the Main Fleet, and others (viz) as many of them as can be got ready, be made in the Downs on March 1: next.
>
> That such ships above the 5th rate as are now waiting to the Westward do repair to the Rendevous with the first Westerly wind that happens after the 25th instant.

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[54] Nottingham to Lord Capell, 5 August 1693: S. P., Ireland, E. B., i. 471.

[55] Henry Guy to the commissioners for victualling, 4 August 1693: S. P. D., Naval, ii. 48i.

[56] *Commons' Journals*, xi. 4.

[57] S. P. D., Naval, ii. 1 November 1693.

[58] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 8 February 1693-4.

[59] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 11 February 1693-4.

In May Admiral Russell complained that delay in fitting out the ships was likely to frustrate pursuit of the enemy, and that it was unwise to put to sea without paying the seamen as promised: "I foresaw this inconveniency, and therefore often reminded the king, in the winter, at the committee of council, that care might be taken to have the fleet paid in time." [60] At a meeting of the committee somewhat later it was ordered "That the Commisisoners of the admiralty do meet the Committee of Councill to morrow at ten of the Clock".[61] In August, at what was doubtless a meeting of "the committee", six present, an order of the queen was noted or decided upon, that one of the regiments should be put aboard the fleet.[62]

At meetings in May 1702, "the Co͞mittee of Councill" considered a matter relating to an expedition; "the Com^tee" disapproved of Sir George Rooke's proposal about transport ships; and "the Lords of the Com^tee of Councill" declared that a prisoner should not be detained.[63] A few days later by direction of "my Lords of the Com^ee of Councill" Secretary Hedges sent out a commission for the lord high admiral to grant commission for privateers, and another to empower the admiralty court to proceed in prize causes.[64] At a further meeting of the committee about this time a memorial concerning English canvas was read: the lords were of opinion that the prince of Denmark should order half of "Holland's Duck, & half of the English Canvas" for the fleet.[65] At the same time the committee considered means and gave directions about procuring more seamen for the fleet. It also considered the dispatching of ships, and Nottingham sent word to the admiralty to see the decisions carried out.[66] A week later " the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill " determined that a ship from Dieppe should be discharged, their opinion to be communicated to his royal highness that the order might be dispatched.[67] Furthermore, they desired the admiralty to take better care of French and of Spanish prisoners.[68] Subsequently Nottingham wrote: " The Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill think it necessary for her Ma$^{tys}$ Service that the State of the ffleet at home be laid before them every week ".[69] Shortly after they desired that the commissioners for sick and wounded should examine French prisoners as to the condition of the French fleet, and send the secretaries an account.[70] In September a report of the success of the English fleet sent by Methuen was laid before the queen in " a Com̄ittee " at Bath.[71]

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[60] Letter to the duke of Shrewsbury, 24 May/3 June 1694: *Correspondence of Shrewsbury* (ed. William Coxe, London, 1821), p. 195.

[61] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 31 July 1694.

[62] 2 August 1694: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 109.

[63] S. P. D. E. B., civ. 19, 20 May 1702.

[64] Letter to Mr. Clarke, 27 May 1702: S. P. D. E. B., cciv. 329.

[65] Nottingham to Mr. Burchett, 2 June 1702: *ibid.,* civ.

In 1704, when Sir George Rooke had suspended various officers, Secretary Hedges wrote: " it is approved of here and the Lords of the Committee will apply to the Prince not to restore them ".[72] Next year " Her Ma$^{ty}$ having been pleased to approve of all the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ agree upon relating to the Sea Expedition ", Hedges, by their command sent out orders to the ordnance officers, the transport officers, and to others.[73] In July " the Lords of the Com̄ittee " thought that Sir George

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[66] Nottingham to Mr. Burchett, 2 June 1702.

[67] Nottingham to Mr. Burchett, 9 June 1702: *ibid.*

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Nottingham to Burchett, 30 June 1702: *ibid.*

[70] Nottingham to the commissioners for sick and wounded, 7 July 1702: *ibid.*

[71] Hedges to Nottingham, Bath, 11 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 204.

[72] Letter to the duke of Somerset, 3 January 1703-4: *Somerset MSS., H. M. C.,* 15th report, vii. 113.

[73] Hedges to the lord high treasurer, Whitehall, 13 April 1705: S. P. D. E. B., cv. 228.

Byng should return at once to his station before Brest.[74] In 1710 the commissioners of transport were ordered to attend the committee of the lords.[75] The year after "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" referred to the board of ordnance a communication from the lieutenant governor of Scilly about danger from the enemy.[76]

The lords of the committee were active also with business that concerned the army, troops, and military supplies. In 1692 a list of quarters having been presented to "the Committee" and considered and approved by them, Nottingham directed that order be given at once for marching and quartering the several regiments.[77] In 1694 a "Committee of Councill" attended by seven with four outsiders also present, considered various projects, then resolved to represent the present state of Limerick to the king and also write to the lords justices of Ireland to know at what cost the fortifications of Limerick might be demolished.[78]

In 1702 Nottingham wrote to the governor of Jersey that his letter being presented to "the Lords of the Committee of Councill", they wished him to know that the allowance for prisoners was but four pence a day in the last war, and that no more would be given now.[79] About this time the committee gave orders about keeping prisoners in Dover Castle and in Pendennis Castle.[80] At a meeting a little later the lords of the committee considered two memorials from merchants who had undertaken to remit money to Holland for the support of her majesty's troops.[81] "I suppose", Hedges wrote to the lord treasurer in October, "your Lordship has heard the Lords of the Com$^{ee}$ are preparing to send Recruits to the Duke of Ormonde".[82] Next year the committee made an inquiry with respect to recruits, information having come that sufficient care of them was not being taken.[83] A little afterward a letter relating to the cartel and a copy of a letter written to Marshal Boufflers were presented to Anne in "a committee of Council".[84] In 1706 Hedges desired account of the quantity of corn bought for Catalonia, that he might inform the lords of the committee of council.[85] In 1708 the committee considered a letter from Sir George Byng giving an account of the lack of powder and cannon at Gibraltar: they asked for a report from the board of ordnance.[86] In 1711 the committee considered the establishment of general and staff officers for the forces in Spain for the year preceding.[87] Two years later, at Bolingbroke's office the committee gave attention to the defences at Gibraltar.[88] Next year the lords considered what had been done since the last session of parliament with respect to fortifications in North Britain: the board of ordnance was to attend them.[89] In 1716 "the Committee of Lords" dealt with the disposal of prisoners.[90]

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[74] Hedges to the lord high admiral's council, 3 July 1705: *ibid.*, cciv. 460.

[75] *Ibid.*, cx, 12 October 1710.

[76] St. John to the board of ordnance, 20 July 1711: *ibid.*, cxi.

[77] Letter to Mr. Clarke, 13 April 1692: *ibid.*, xcviii.

[78] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 8 February 1693-4.

[79] Letter of 27 May 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ.

[80] *Ibid.*, 3 June 1702.

The lords of the committee of the council attended to a great variety of other matters, relating to local affairs.

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[81] S.P.F.E.B., lxix, 14 July 1702.

[82] Letter from Bath, 1 October 1702: S.P.D.E.B., ci. 249.

[83] Nottingham to Blathwayt, 20 February 1702-3: *ibid.*, civ. 214.

[84] Secretary Hedges to Lord Cutts, 13 April 1703: *H.M.C., Frankland-Russell-Astley MSS.*, p. 124.

[85] J. Tucker to the commissioners for transportation, Cockpit, 26 February 1705-6: S.P.D.E.B., cv, part ii. 13.

[86] Sunderland to the board of ordnance, 12 November 1708: *ibid.*, cvi.

[87] St. John to the secretary at war, 13 February 1710-11: *ibid.*, cix.

[88] *Ibid.*, cxv, 20 November 1713.

[89] Bolingbroke to the board of ordnance, 14 March 1713-14: *ibid.*, cxiv.

[90] *Ibid.*, cxvii, 28 June 1716.

In 1690 Nottingham wrote to the earl of Bath—lord lieutenant of Cornwall: there had lately been tumults there occasioned by the tinners; "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" had been informed that the Cornwall militia was not ready to assist the civil magistrates in suppressing the disorder; so they wished necessary care by the earl in the future to prevent or disperse such riotous meetings.[91] The lords of the committee also directed that a warrant should be issued to arrest certain ones.[92] In 1695 the lords of the committee of council, informed that dyers' journeymen and apprentices had threatened to pull down the house of a French Protestant plying that trade at Windsor, determined to quarter a company of soldiers there to protect him.[93] In 1702 the committee of council directed justices of the peace to investigate disorders committed against one of the regiments.[94] Later Nottingham asked the lord keeper to come "to the Committee att my Office" to help prepare instructions that would be given in privy council to the judges about to go on circuit.[95] Two years after the committee reviewed evidence concerning a crime.[96] Shortly after they considered a petition, and recommended that a pension be granted.[97] In 1709 an opinion of the judges was laid before "the Queen and Committee of Council who do fully approve of the Opinion of the Judges".[98] Shortly after a letter of the mayor and magistrates of Bristol was by the secretary communicated to the queen and the lords of the committee, who approved doings of these officials.[99] In July the committee considered a communication from the lord mayor of London about suppressing disorders occasioned by the high price of bread.[100] In 1715 information concerning riots was laid before "the Committee of Lords." [101] Later that year Stanhope, secretary of state, informed the deputy lieutenants and justices of Middlesex and Westminster that "the Lords of the Committee of Council" having considered their memorial desired some of them to attend the next morning at the Cockpit.[102]

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[91] Letter of 10 June 1690: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 94.

[92] Nottingham to the bishop of Exeter, 11 June 1690: *ibid.*, fo. 95.

[93] Shrewsbury to Blathwayt, 18 November 1695: *ibid.*, c. 169.

[94] Nottingham to the justices of the peace near Dartford, 8 June 1702: *ibid.*, civ.

[95] Letter of 6 July 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ.

[96] Hedges to Lord Chief Justice Holt, St. James's, 7 May 1704: *ibid.*, cv.

[97] Hedges to the lord high treasurer, 21 July 1704: *ibid.*

[98] Sunderland to Lord Chief Justice Clerk, 7 May 1709: *ibid.*, cviii.

The relations of "the committee of lords" to the privy council was much like that of the "committee of foreign affairs" to the council in earlier times: the committee dealt with some important matters, especially the giving of counsel or opinion with respect to matters of policy and state, which came before the privy council only after they had been decided, or else came to the council not at all, while the committee dealt also with various matters of administration or government routine, generally the important things, but also any others as the members saw fit, making in committee the effective decisions thereupon, which, brought before the privy council as recommendations, were almost certain to be ordered formally there. It may be, moreover, that in theory the lords of the committee of council considered themselves, if need arose, to be a committee of the whole council, as other committees of the privy council came to be regarded. Whether or not this be true, it is certain that at times the principal advisers of the crown meeting as "committee of council" turned themselves into a privy council and formally adopted that which had been decided upon in their committee.

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[99] Sunderland to Lord Chief Justice Clerk, 23 May 1709.

[100] Sunderland to the lord mayor, 12 July 1709: *ibid.*

[101] *Ibid.*, cxlvii, 14 July 1715.

[102] *Ibid.*, cxvii, 6 October 1715.

" The committee " dealt with many matters before they were presented in privy council, and did not always report to the council. In July 1690 Nottingham wrote to Sir Robert Holmes, governor of the Isle of Wight: " I have recd your Letter and altho: there hath been care taken formerly for the Safety of the Island, yet I haue represented to the Queen at the Comittee what you writt to me now on this Subject that such further care may be taken as shall be thought necessary." [103] Ten days later, Mary being in privy council at Whitehall, a letter from Sir Robert Holmes was read, and the queen ordered that as much as two hundred pounds be allowed for defence of the island.[104] In 1692 Nottingham wrote that he was sending the titles of bills which " the Lords of the Committee " thought should be passed into acts of parliament in Ireland.[105] In the register of the council there is nothing about this. In August, however, one of the acts in question, transmitted along with others from Ireland, was read in the council and approved.[106] In 1693 the minutes of a meeting, endorsed " Committee of Council ", in which among other things it was ordered that the admiralty board and the navy board should attend " the Committee ", contain the memorandum: " To move the Privy councill for an order that the Mediterranean squadron be mann'd with their highest complement." [107] Next year at a " Committee of Councill ", the king and seven being present, " the Establishment of the Marine regiments to be prepared, with the alterations, by the Admiralty, and laid before the King the next Councill ".[108] Four days later the king in a privy council of twenty at Whitehall, "the annexed Draft of an Establishment for the Two Marine Regiments having been read at the Boord this day, His Ma$^{\text{ty}}$ in Councill is pleased to approve of the same ".[109]

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[103] S. P. D. E. B., xcviii, 8 July 1690.

[104] P. C. R., lxxiii, 18 July 1690.

[105] Letter to Sir R. Reynell and others, 9 March 1691-2: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii.

[106] P. C. R., lxxiv, 1 August 1692.

[107] S. P. D., Naval, ii, 1 November 1693.

In August 1694 minutes of Shrewsbury record a meeting of six, its character not described by him with any title: here decision for "An order from the Queen that Venner's Regiment be put on board the Fleet, in the place of the battalion of the Guards commanded from thence ".[110] The same day there was a privy council at Whitehall, attended by eleven, of whom five were among those who had composed the committee held earlier that day: a petition of the Turkey Company was referred to the admiralty; a resolution of the states general was turned over to the commissioners of the treasury; another petition was referred to the treasury; bills were presented; other petitions were considered or referred; an order in council was given upon information from the committee of trade and plantations about military quotas to be furnished by various plantations; there is nothing about the regiment or the guards.[111] Shortly after at a meeting of five, of which Shrewsbury took minutes, it was determined: "Write to Mr. Attorney to prepare a proclamation against tomorrow for the re-taking Col. Parker." [112] Next day at a privy council of ten at Whitehall, at which were present all five of the committee that had decided about Parker: "Upon reading this day att the Board the Ensuing Proclamation the same was read & Approved off in Councill." [113]

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[108] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 18 February 1693-4.

[109] P. C. R., lxxv, 22 February 1693-4.

[110] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 109.

[111] P. C. R., lxxv, 2 August 1694.

[112] *Buccleuch Manuscripts, Montagu House,* ii, part i. 115.

[113] P. C. R., lxxv, 14 August 1694.

In 1715 " the Lords of the Committee " considered the draft of a proclamation before it was submitted.[114] Next year a petition from Carlisle was " Read to the Lords of the Committee ".[115]

Altogether, in the latter part of the seventeenth century and in the earlier part of the eighteenth, " the committee " or " the lords of the committee ", along with the " cabinet ", appears to have been the body in which was directed or carried on the principal executive and administrative work of the kingdom. Important matters were considered and advice thereupon given, as a long time before in privy council. The lords directed naval, military, and financial business. They received, considered, and, if they wished, referred, numerous memorials and petitions. Much of the work done in the offices of the secretaries of state had to do with correspondence in which the activities or decisions of the committee were communicated to the many officials or representatives abroad whom the decisions concerned. This was as it had been in the days when what contemporaries called the " committee of foreign affairs " was the principal effective conciliar body under the king.

During all this time, however, the student is aware from many statements or allusions that contemporaries also ascribed the functions of advising the sovereign in respect of his greater concerns and the arranging and deciding of his more important business to what they called the " cabinet council ". It is proposed to consider the problem of the origin of the cabinet, what the " cabinet " was, and its relations with the " committee of foreign affairs ", and with " the lords of the committee of the council ".

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[114] S. P. D. E. B., cxvii, 22 July 1715.

[115] S. P. D., George I, vi, 14 December 1716.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE CABINET COUNCIL

In any study of the privy council and its various committees increasingly during the seventeenth century occur references to the cabinet or cabinet council. Generally these terms appear in no formal record, but outsiders who make relation of council or of court, numerous correspondents, and others use them more and more as the century proceeds. For the most part they assume their meaning is understood and so attempt no description of the body of which they speak, but evidently refer to a group of select counsellors of the crown possessing the sovereign's confidence and entrusted with much of his most important work. It is necessary now to relate the history of the appearance and use of the terms, and attempt to define the body so named.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when cabinet government had become so important, some had curiosity about the original meaning of the word and its earliest use in England to denote a small advisory and executive council.[1] Etymologists trace the word back to the Welsh *cab*—hut, small house, and the Irish Gaelic *caban*—cabin. In two forms—*capanna* or *cabanna*, meaning shelter or house—the word is found in medieval Latin.[2] In other guise it occurs in the medieval vernacular tongues. Readers of Boccaccio will remember the *capannetto* or small outhouse in the convent garden to which Masetto was conducted.[3] And readers of the *Orlando Furioso* will recall that at the beginning of the sixteenth century Ariosto referred to rustic huts or village houses as *capanne* and *tuguri* as had been done in the seventh century by Isidore of Seville.[4] In the course of time also appear the Spanish dialectal derivative *gabinete* and the Italian *gabinetto,* and, whether from them or from the Celtic original, the French *cabinet.* In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cabin and cabinet are also well established in English usage. Cabinet was now understood to mean a chest of drawers, a small room, a closet.

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[1] "Cábinet Council.—In what year was this term first used, or in what book is the phrase first known to occur?" Edward Scott, in *Notes and Queries,* fifth series, v. 29 (1876). Answers presently given referred to Bacon's *Essays,* Watson's *God's Anatomy* (1649), Fuller's *Church History, Hudibras,* and Evelyn's *Memoirs; ibid.,* pp. 174, 297.

[2] "*De ædificiis rusticis . . . Tugurium* casula est, quam faciunt sibi custodes vinearum ad tegimen sui, quasi *tegurium . . .* Hanc rustici *capannam* vocant, quod unum tantum *capiat.*" S. Isidori Hispalensi

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Episcopi, *Etymologiarum Libri XX,* book xv, chapter xii: Migne, *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus,* lxxxii, 552. In 1246 the archbishop of Narbonne in a council of the church advised: "Investigent hæreticos in villis, et extra domos singulorum, et cameras subterraneas, Cabannas, et clausellas, et alia latibula perquirendo." Ducange, *Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis, sub voce* "Capanna."

[3] "Costei con atti lusinghevoli presolo per la mano, & egli faccendo cotali risa sciocche il meno nel capannetto": *Decamerone* (ed. London, 1757), ii. 13—giornata terza, novella prima.

[4] He is speaking of the place to which the victorious Mandricardo carried Doralice:

> Vedendo il Sol già basso, e mezzo ascoso,
> Cominciò à cavalcar con maggior fretta,
> Tanto ch'udì sonar zuffoli, e canne,
> E vide poi fumar ville, e capanne.
>
> Erano pastorali alloggiamenti;
> Miglior stanza, e più commoda, che bella.
> Quivi il guardian cortese de gli armenti
> Onorò il cavaliero, e la donzella
> Tanto, che si chiamar da lui contenti;
> Che non pur per cittadi, e per castella,
> Ma per tuguri ancora, e per fenili,
> Spesso si truovan gli uomini gentili.

Canto xiv, stanzas 61, 62.

In the sense of a room, especially a small or a private room, it came to be well known in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1566 an account of the murder of Rizzio was sent to the privy council of England. The narrators reported that the king of Scotland with several others went.[5]

> thorowe his owne Chamber by the previe stayers, up to the Q. Chamber, yoyinge [adjoining] to w$^{ch}$ ther is a Cabinet abowte xij. footes square, in the same a lyttle lowe reposinge bedde and a table, at the w$^{ch}$ ther were syttinge at the supper the Q., the Ladie Argile, and David with his cappe upon his heade. Into the Cabinet ther com̄ethe in the K. and L. Ruthen, who willed David to come forthe, sayinge that ther was no place for hym. The Q. saide that yt was her wyll̄; her howsbonde answerde that yt was agaynste her honor . . . David was thruste owte of the Cabinet thorowe the bede chamber into the chamber of p$^{r}$sens . . .

"Their obscenities and baudye talke at table and in Cabinet is their sauce to all the rest", said a writer in 1626.[6] About that time Abraham Vanderdort was spoken of as holding several employments under the king, among which "Keep of his Ma$^{ty}$ Cabinett Roome att S$^{t}$ James."[7] In 1629 the French ambassador was summoned to see Charles I in the king's cabinet.[8] In "his close Cabinet" Richelieu received the English ambassador in 1644.[9] The royal cabinet in Hampton Court appears in an inventory of 1659.[10] In 1664 the well-known Tom Chiffinch was receiving a pension of one hundred pounds a year as keeper of the cabinet of Charles II.[11] The next year Clarendon went for a private interview with the king, "and was admitted into his cabinet".[12] A year later Pepys delivered a letter to Chiffinch, who passed it on to another in the cabinet where the king was.[13] Evelyn speaks of the cabinet in 1667.[14] In 1679 Charles II received the French ambassador in the cabinet of the duchess of Portsmouth.[15] In 1686 James II discussed foreign matters with another French ambassador in his cabinet.[16] At the same time Barillon wrote to Louis XIV that those who knew what was going on in the cabinet could perceive that resolution had been taken to secure for the Catholics all the advantages that would make them safe for the future.[17] In 1693 a newsletter written in French spoke of the duke of Ormonde coming out of the cabinet after a private interview with William III.[18] Towards the end of the seventeenth century a French lexicographer defined *cabinet* as a private room in a large house.[19] Visitors to such a palace as Hampton Court nowadays go through many a little room designated "cabinet" when they pass from one large chamber to another.[20] Probably in cold weather especially these small quarters were more comfortable than the larger places, and so were preferred for business and for small meetings.

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[5] Letter of the earl of Bedford and Thomas Randolph, Berwick, 27 March 1566: Cotton MS., Caligula, B, x. 384, 385, quoted in Henry Ellis, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History* (2d ed., London, 1825-46), first series, ii. 209, 210.

[6] "Discovery of the Practises of the French, in the Queenes Court": S. P. D., Charles I, xxxii, 92.

[7] *Ibid.*, cv, 3 May 1628.

[8] "Il y a environ quinze jours qu'au retour de la Chasse, moy estant chez la Royne, il m'envoia quérir en son Cabinet": M. de Chasteauneuf to Richelieu, London, 10 September 1629 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, lxvi. 152.

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[9] "Now your business begins to take for the better since my rencontre with the Cardinal, by the Queen's private order, in his close Cabinet". Lord Goring to the queen of England, Paris, 15 January 1644 (N.S.): *Clarendon State Papers,* ii. 163.

[10] S.P.D., Interregnum, cciii. 41.

[11] S.P.D.E.B., xvi, 23 April 1664.

[12] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* ii. 99.

[13] Pepys, *Diary,* 18 November 1666.

[14] "This evening I heard rare Italian voices, two eunuchs and one woman, in his Majesty's greene chamber next his cabinet": *Diary* (ed. Bray), 24 January 1666-7. Shortly after the petition of Giovanni Sebenico "Humbly sheweth that haueing serued your Majesty for the Space of two yeares and the place of Master of the Italian Musick being now vacant as well for your Majestyes Chamber or Cabinett as of her Majestys Chappell and Cabinett"—so he begs the appointment: S.P.D., Charles II, ccxxxix, 22 April 1668.

[15] Barillon to Louis XIV, Windsor, 21 September 1679 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxliii. 318.

[16] "Le Roy d'Angleterre . . . me fit l'honneur de me dire de le suivre lorsqu'il entra dans son cabinet". Bonrepaus to Seignelay, London, 1 April 1686 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxv.

[17] Letter of 1 April 1686 (N.S.): *ibid.,* fo. 288.

Meanwhile the term "cabinet", meaning a small house and then a retired or private room, had taken on the connotation and then the signification of secret things.[21] Hence from about the beginning of the seventeenth century writers of Italy, of France, and of England had been speaking of a "cabinet council", when they meant a small body of advisers meeting apart from some larger council of state, privately, perhaps, in the cabinet of the king. The earliest, it may be, certainly the most celebrated early instance in English occurs in the well-known essay "Of Counsel", which Francis Bacon wrote not later than 1612, and which he may have written as early as 1607:[22]

> The inconveniences that have beene noted in calling, and vsing Councell are three—ffirst the revealing of

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[18] *Denbigh MSS., H.M.C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 213.

[19] "Cabinet. s. m. Le lieu le plus retiré dans le plus bel appartement des Palais, des grandes maisons. Un appartement royale consiste en sale, antichambre, chambre et *cabinet* avec une galerie a costé": Antoine Furetiere, *Dictionaire Universel* (Hague and Rotterdam, 1690).

[20] At the beginning of the seventeenth century in a list of furniture in the earl of Salisbury's house mention is made of the east chamber, the middle chamber, the "Cabinet chamber", the great chamber, the street chamber, and the gallery: S. P. D., James I, xxvi, 25 January 1606-7.

[21] "*Cabinet,* veut dire aussi, Les secrets, les mystères les plus cachez de la Cour": *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie Françoise* (Paris, 1694).

[22] British Museum, Harleian MS. 5106, fo. 21.

> affayres whereby they become lesse secrett. Secondly the weakening of the authoritie of Princes, as if they were lesse of themselves; Thirdly the daunger of being vnfaithfullie councelled, and more for the good of them that councell, then of him that is councelled. ffor w^ch^ inconveniences the doctrine of *Italie,* and practize of *Fraunce* hath introduced *Cabanett* Councelles, a remedy worse then the disease, w^ch^ hath tourned *Metis* the wife, to *Metis* the Mistresse, that is the councelles of State to w^ch^ Princes are solemly marryed, to councells of gracous persons recommended cheifly by flattery and affection. But for secrecie, Princes are not bound to communicate all matters w^th^ all Councello^rs^, but may extract, and select. Neither is it necessarye, that he that consulteth, what he should doe, should declare what he will doe; But lett Princes beware that the vnsecreting of theire affayres come not from themselves; and as for *Cabanett* Councell It may be theire Mot *plenus rimarū sum* . . .

These phrases were printed "Cabanet counsels" and "Cabanet Counsell" in the edition of 1612; "Cabinet Counsels" and "Cabinet Counsells" in that of 1625; while the Latin version of 1638 had "Interiora, quæ vulgo vocantur Cabinetti".[23] In contemporary Italian version the translator made the rendering "Consiglio di Cabinetti" and "Consiglio del Cabinetto"; while a French translation had "conseils de Cabinet" and "conseil de Cabinet".[24] In 1611 John Speed, the historian, recounting the reign of Henry II, wrote of "a Cabanet-

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[23] Edward Arber, *A Harmony of the Essays, etc. of Francis Bacon* (London 1871), pp. 316-319.

[24] *Saggi Morali del Signore Francesco Bacono* (London, 1618), pp. 22, 23; *Essays Moraux, du Tres-Honorable Seigneur François Bacon* (London, 1619), pp. 36, 37.

Counsellour ".[25] About 1614 a petitioner asked that a pension granted him by the king might be paid: he will multiply his services to the state, giving the benefit of knowledge which he has drawn from the greatest cabinet of Europe.[26]

About this time Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have composed a book entitled *The Cabinet-Council.*[27] In the seventh chapter of his work, " Of councils and counsellors in general ", Raleigh says: " Note also, that in every state, of what quality soever, a secret or cabinet-Council is mainly necessary." And he adds:

> Many princes, ancient and modern, have used to select out of their council two or three, or four at most, to whom only they did impart their affairs. Example; The emperor Augustus had Mecænas and Agrippa; Julius Cæsar, Q. Pædius and Cor. Balbus, whom he only

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[25] " Because Gouernment is the Soule of State, and Wisedome the Soule of Gouernment, he chooseth to himselfe a Body of Counsell out of the most eminent persons ", selecting sundry prelates of chiefest note and some of the laity; " but for a Cabanet-Counsellour at all times, he had his own mother, *Matildis* the Empresse." *The History of Great Britaine,* etc. (London, 1611), p. 456.

[26] " Une science experimentale qu'il a par long espace de temps puisee du plus grand cabinet de L'Europe, où se traictent et resoluent les plus importants negoces en matieres d'estat, et concernant la reduction et subiugation des Royaumes et Prouinces ". Nicholas de Rebbe to the king: S. P. D., James I, lxxviii. 93.

[27] *The Cabinet-Council: Containing the Chief Arts of Empire, and Mysteries of State; Discabineted in Political and Polemical Aphorisms, Grounded on Authority and Experience . . . Published by John Milton.* This is included in the principal edition of Raleigh's *Works* (Oxford, 1829). In a prefatory note Milton declared that he had long been in possession of the manuscript written by Raleigh, that lately finding it by chance among other books and papers, he had on reading it over thought not proper that it be withheld from the public. Raleigh, *Works,* viii. 35, 36. A large mass of Raleigh's writings seems to have been left in manuscript. " Mr. Hamden " is said to have asserted that a little before the civil wars he had been at the charge of transcribing 3452 sheets of such writings: *Notes and Queries,* 5th series, v. 49. Raleigh was beheaded 29 October 1618.

> trusted with his cipher and secrets, being counsellors of the cabinet (as we now call them).[28]

Whatever was the case in England, it had recently been so in France.

Whether or not the name as yet applied to any group of councillors in England, it is not improbable that such a group existed. In 1610 James I declared in one of his proclamations that nothing remained unsearched by men's curiosity they not being content with knowledge of so much of God's will as it pleased him to reveal, "but they will needs sit with him in his most priuie Closet, and become priuie of his most inscrutable Councels"—small wonder that they invaded the mysteries of kings and princes.[29] In general, it should be said that especially later on the English term "closet" is approximately the equivalent of the borrowed foreign term "cabinet", in the signification of a small room. In 1612 a French ambassador wrote of several Scots who had positions at court, among whom was "un Secrétaire du Cabinet".[30] In 1620 another French ambassador wrote of opinion in the cabinet concerning the ambassadors from Germany.[31] About the same time, however, when Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, wrote a detailed account of the king, the privy council, Buckingham, and the principal ones in England he made no mention of a small group or of a cabinet council.[32]

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[28] *Works,* viii. 45, 146.

[29] S. P. D., James I, clxxxvii. 14.

[30] De Buisseaux to de Puisieux, London, 5 October 1612 (N. S): Transcripts from Paris, xlv. 275.

[31] "On va tousjours asseurant icy en public, que Mess$^{rs}$ les Ambas$^{rs}$ d'Allemagne ne portent aucune Instruction pour l'accomodement de l'affaire de Bohesme: mais on dit au Cabinet, qu'ilz sont chargez d'essayer à désunir les Princes Protestans." De Tillières to de Puysieux, London, 27 May 1620 (N. S.): *ibid.,* liii. 112.

[32] Letter to the king of Spain, 25 March 1620 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, xi.

The first unmistakable mention by an Englishman of a cabinet council in England, which the author has been able to find, occurs in a letter of John Chamberlain in 1622. During that period Sir Dudley Carleton was ambassador from England successively to various European courts. He was always hoping some day to be recalled to a post of importance at home—a wish realized later on, when he became an important member of the privy council and of some of its foremost committees, and even secretary of state. While abroad he constantly kept himself informed of doings at the English court through the letters of various correspondents. Of them, perhaps, the best informed was John Chamberlain, who wrote him a series of accounts containing much news of importance. In 1622 Chamberlain informed him that

> Some speake of a choise cabinet counsell to be selected out of the body of the whole table, to whom matters of most secrecie and importance are to be committed, in w^ch^ number the Prince, the Duke, both the marquises, the L. Treasurer, L. chamberlain, L. marshall and Secretarie Caluert are nominated.

On the back of this letter is the endorsement: "A Choyce of a Cabinet Councill selected out of whole Table", so that the phrase may not have seemed novel or unusual to the correspondents.[33] That very year one of the Venetian ambassadors sent back an account of England in which he said that the government of the country was in the king, Buckingham, the prince, and four or five of the cabinet.[34] Next year when the prince and Buckingham were in Spain, Chamberlain declared that Gondomar at the instance of Charles was made one of the cabinet council of Spain.[35]

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[33] S. P. D., James I, cxxxi, 8 June 1622.

[34] "L'essenza del governo ristretta solo in Sua Maestà e nel favorito, con partecipazione di molto ma non di tutto al sig. principe, per tenerlo senza disgusto e documentarlo per la futura sua reggenza, ed a 4 o 5 del gabinetto." "Relazione d'Inghilterra di Girolamo Lando": Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 4th series, i. 247, 248.

In 1623 Massinger, the dramatist, makes the first of his allusions to the cabinet council, which are very striking even though they occur merely in his plays. His repetition of such expressions during several years following would make it seem that the idea had seized his imagination strongly. This is all the more interesting when it is recalled that his father had been house-steward to Henry Herbert, second earl of Pembroke and also to William, the third earl. The dramatist himself is described as servant to Philip, fourth earl, from whom also he received a pension. The importance of this association with the Pembroke household and of his possible knowledge of what was said and done there is the more evident when it is also recalled that Philip, earl of Pembroke, was one of the powerful group of five councillors whom Charles I appointed in 1625, and that later on he appears as one of the all-important "committee of foreign affairs". In Massinger's *Dvke of Millaine* (1623) two of the characters say:[36]

*Stephano*: You neuer heard the motiues that induc'd him,
To this strange course?
*Tiberio*: No, those are Cabinet Councels,
And not to be communicated, but
To such as are his owne, and sure; Alas,
We fill vp emptie places, and in publique,
Are taught to giue our suffrages to that,
Which was before determin'd . . .

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[35] "For this seruice (at the Princes suit) is made one of the eight or cabinet counsaile". Chamberlain to Carleton, 5 April 1623: S.P.D., James I, cxlii.

[36] British Museum, *The Dvke of Millaine* (London, 1623), ii. 1.

Next year Sir Francis Nethersole, another of Carleton's informants, wrote that the Dutch ambassadors were striving to have James I join the states in sending out a fleet against Spain, but that the king hesitated because English merchants had not yet had time to withdraw their goods thence. " One of the Cabinet hath told me that the P. and my L. D. will naut of their wish if they gayne not that poynt also ere long." [37]

Charles I at the beginning of his reign appointed five of the principal members of his privy council—the lord treasurer (James, Lord Ley), the lord admiral (the duke of Buckingham), the lord chamberlain (the earl of Pembroke), Lord Conway (secretary of state), and Fulk, Lord Brooke—by special commission to be a body to deal with all his most important affairs.[38] Within a fortnight Chamberlain knew of this: " We talke of a selected or cabinet counsaile whereto none are admitted but the D. of Buck: the Lord Treasurer .L. chamberlain .L. Brooke and the .L. Conway." [39] A little later Walter Yonge writing his diary in Devonshire and doubtless recording such gossip as reached him, made note: " June, 1625, the King made choice of six of the nobility for his *Council of the Cabinet*." He named correctly Buckingham, Pembroke, and Conway, included wrongly two others, and gave no name for a sixth member whom he supposed chosen.[40]

The ambassador of France and of Venice as well as other emissaries frequently mentioned the cabinet or the cabinet council when sending back news about England. In 1626 the bishop of Mande, grand almoner of Henrietta Maria, when giving an account of affairs at court and of the position of the queen, informed Richelieu that the cabinet gave them much trouble.[41] In December the Venetian ambassador wrote—at a time when some of the privy council were in the country trying to collect the subsidies—that in respect of a matter the absence of the cabinet ministers necessarily caused some delay.[42] In the following summer he reported that when unexpected news came of a large Spanish fleet with troops aboard making for Dunkirk, Charles I, though the news arrived two hours after midnight, called a cabinet council, where it was determined that the lord admiral should put to sea immediately with the ships ready in the Downs.[43] Some months afterward he had no more news about the proceedings of the fleet, since the advice which reached the court from the duke of Buckingham did not get out of the king's cabinet.[44] In 1629 he said that the necessity of finding money and the peril of civil strife were usurping most of the government's time and that of the cabinet council.[45]

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[37] Letter to Carleton: S. P. D., James I, clxi, 31 March 1624.

[38] S. P. D., Charles I, i, 9 April 1625.

[39] Chamberlain to Carleton: S. P. D., Charles I, i, 23 April 1625.

[40] *Diary of Walter Yonge, Esq.* (Camden Society, xli), p. 83.

Elizabeth, queen of Bohemia and sister of Charles I, in her exile and in her great hope of assistance from England, also kept herself informed through friends and correspondents of what went on at the English court. One of them, Sir Thomas Roe, wrote to her in 1630: [46]

> I am too new yet to venture upon any within England: where I am the greatest stranger: and now M^r^

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[41] "Le Cabinet d'en hault nous trouble fort". Letter of 2 August 1626 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, lxiv. 124. A little later he said: "On m'a dit que le Cabinet d'en hault n'y avoit pas peu contribué, et qu'ilz ont creu par ceste estincelle rallumer les feux demi esteints de vostre Cour." Letter of 18 August 1626 (N. S.): *ibid.,* fo. 152.

[42] Letter of Alvise Contarini, London, 25 December 1626 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xiii. 221.

[43] Letter of 11 June 1627 (N. S.): *ibid.,* xiv. 457, 458.

[44] "Dal Gabinetto del Ré". Letter of 3 September 1627 (N. S.): *ibid.,* fo. 552.

[45] Letter to the Venetian ambassador in France, 6 April 1629 (N. S.): *ibid.,* xvii. 2325.

[46] Letter of 14/24 July 1630: S. P. D., Charles I, clxx.

> Controller [Sir Henry Vane], who is of the Cabinett, and one of those th$^{t}$ can read whispers, will both take up all yo$^{r}$ tyme, and is much abler to enforme yo$^{u}$ what is thought in the Court, then I can tell yo$^{u}$ what is done in Paules.

Shortly after, writing to Henry, earl of Holland, he gave his opinion of the state of affairs abroad and the best policy for England, though "I know how dangerous a boldnes it is, to enter into the Cabinett & Counsells of Princes".[47] Somewhat later, just after Wentworth had been appointed lord deputy of Ireland, the master of the wards in Ireland wrote offering advice, though he, using the term in more general sense, also hesitated "to come near the Cabinet of your Lordship's Advices".[48]

In 1632, when his *Maid of Honovr* was published, Massinger spoke of a cabinet council again: [49]

*Adorni*: May I presume to aske if the Embassador
Imploy'd by *Ferdinand*, the Duke of *Urbin*
Hath audience this morning?
*Enter Fulgentio*
*Astutio*: 'Tis uncertaine,
For though a counsaylor of state, I am not
Of the Cabinet counsaile. But ther's one
if he please
That may resolve you.

Next year, in another play, *The Guardian*, again one of Massinger's characters spoke of cabinet advisers: [50]

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[47] Letter of 20 September 1630: S. P. D., Charles I, clxxiii.

[48] Sir William Parsons to the lord deputy, 4 February 1631-2: *Strafford Letters*, i. 64.

[49] British Museum, *The Maid of Honovr* (London, 1632), i. 1.

[50] Massinger, *The Guardian* (ed. W. Gifford, London, 1840), ii. 3.

*Adorio*: I thank you, gentlemen, for your studied care
In what concerns my honour; but in that
I'll steer my own course. Yet, that you may know
You are still my cabinet counsellors, my bosom
Lies open to you . . .

In 1636 the Venetian ambassador wrote about designs attributed to some of the cabinet ministers.[51] Later that year he spoke of the mutability and confusion in the policy of the cabinet.[52] However much used the term was coming to be, however, it was one of ordinary usage and common parlance without any official significance whatever, as it was for a long time after. In 1637 the earl of Leicester, writing from Paris about the mother of Henrietta Maria and Louis XIII, who wished to go to England, reported that a Frenchman had said: "they knew if she were in *France*, they should never be quiet; for with those of her Cabinet, she would be perpetually Practising to trouble the Government of this State." [53] In a confused passage two years later Wentworth wrote from Ireland about "Cabinets", when what he meant, apparently, was the secrecy of counsellors.[54] But in lengthy "Houshold Orders" written in the king's hand about this time, containing minute regulations about the government of the court, the term "cabinet" was not used.[55] In 1640 the writer of a newsletter said that the Scots commissioners had been heard before "the King & the Cabinet Councell".[56] It was in "*the Cabinet Council*" that the earl of

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[51] Letter of Angelo Correr, Oxford, 6 August 1636 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xviii. 174.

[52] Letter of 12 December 1636 (N. S.): *ibid.*, fo. 224.

[53] Letter to Secretary Windebank, 6/16 October 1637: *Sydney Papers*, ii. 418.

[54] Letter to Charles I, 12 February 1638-9: *Strafford Letters*, ii. 283.

[55] S. P. D., Charles I, ccclxxv. 2 (1637?).

[56] *Ibid.*, ccccxlvii, 30 i.

Strafford spoke those words about dissolution of parliament which, afterwards revealed, brought him to the block.[57]

On the assembling of the Long Parliament in 1640 complaints were at once directed at the evil counsellors of the king, who were at first held responsible for all evils said to afflict the kingdom; and some of the complaints were aimed specifically at the cabinet council. Four days after parliament was opened Sir John Holland, speaking in the commons about grievances, said: " the dearest and chiefest part of our inheritance, hath been infringed, broken, and set at nought in the commonwealth, by the over-potency of some great ones, secret counsellors of state." [58] In October 1641 a committee was appointed by the commons to prepare a petition to the king to prevent mischief in the commonwealth from choice and employment of evil counsellors and ministers of state.[59] Shortly after Pym made a long speech in which he imputed existing ills to evil advisers.[60] In a conference of the two houses a week later he referred to " ill Counsels ", and declared that the principal and most mischievous designs had been practised by such as had access unto his majesty.[61] In the Grand Remonstrance, presented shortly after, the commons asked that all counsellors of state might be sworn to obey all the laws concerning liberty of the subject, and take oath not to receive any pension or reward from a foreign prince unless they revealed it to the king's council.[62]

In the Grand Remonstrance also the commons complained that " Many noble personages were counsellors in name; but the power and authority remained in a few of such as were most addicted to this party [Laud and the church]; whose resolutions and determinations were brought to the table for countenance and execution, not for debate and deliberation." [63] Early in 1642 Pym, in another conference between the houses, said that the epidemic from which the commonwealth suffered had a superior and universal cause—the evil counsels and designs of those who, under his majesty, " bear the greatest Sway in Government." [64] In February, parliament presented an address to Charles.

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[57] Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (ed. by W. D. Macray, Oxford, 1888), i. 290, 296.

[58] *Parliamentary History,* ii. 648.

[59] *Commons' Journals,* ii. 297.

[60] *Parliamentary History,* ii. 930, 931.

[61] *Lords' Journals,* iv. 431, 432.

[62] *Parliamentary History,* ii. 963.

> The Causes of our Misery and Danger we conceive to be these:
>
> . . .
>
> 9. The Managing and Transacting the great Affairs of the Realm in private Cabinet Councils, by Men unknown, not trusted by the Wisdom of the Law, nor well-affected to the publick Good of the Kingdom:
>
> . . .
>
> The Remedies . . .
>
> 7. That the great Affairs of the Kingdom may not be concluded or transacted by the Advice of private Men, or by any unknown or unsworn Counsellors . . .

Public matters proper for the privy council should be debated by the members of the privy council, and the members ought to be recommended by parliament.[65] In May, a declaration of parliament concerning the militia asserted that the counsel of evil and wicked advisers had more credit with Charles than that of his great council of parliament.[66] Members of parliament continued to impute all actions of the king which displeased them to the prompting of evil advisers.[67] "It appears", said the commons in June, "that the King, seduced by wicked Counsel, intends to make War against his Parliament." [68] And in August, when parliament issued a declaration about the earl of Essex, in answer to the king's proclamation: "the Matter of this libelous and scandalous Paper is the Venom of those traiterous Counsellors about His Majesty, long since discovered, and so often complained of, by both Houses of Parliament." [69]

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[63] *Ibid.,* col. 952.

[64] *Lords' Journals,* iv. 540.

[65] *Commons' Journals,* ii. 443, 444.

[66] *Lords' Journals,* v. 46.

In June 1643, when the civil war was proceeding, parliament preparing a petition to Charles with a view to accommodation, urged him to return to parliament, his great and most faithful council, whose advice he would find more to his greatness, honor, and safety, "than the Counsels of some few about You, whose Counsels if they may prevail, we find all our Petitions and Endeavours for the Peace of this Kingdom to be fruitless." [70] In 1644 Milton wrote: "men will then see what difference there is between the magnanimity of a triennial Parlament, and that jealous hautinesse of Prelates and cabin Counsellours that usurpt of late".[71] That same year a newspaper writer, composed an attack filled with rambling allusions whose exact bearing cannot, perhaps, be exactly ascertained now: [72]

> He saies, *Master Speaker and the State Committee met to heare him*, what? you take it ill that we are not at Counsell, or recreations on the Lords day, according to the old *Court Divinity*, and the Reformation of *Canterbury*, and the practice of your Cabinet or Junto,

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[67] *Lords' Journals*, v. 46, pp., 165, 183, 200, 252, 260, 266, 275, 276, 277, 285, 288; *Commons' Journals*, ii. 520, 525, 528, 550, 556, 577, 593.

[68] *Commons' Journals*, ii. 618.

[69] *Lords' Journals*, v. 288.

[70] *Ibid.*, vi. 100.

[71] *Areopagitica*, in *The Works of John Milton* (London, 1863), iv. 397.

[72] *Mercurius Britanicus*, 22 July 1644.

> but our State-Committee, and Master *Lenthall* know better how to honour God . . .

Some of this was doubtless said in respect of the Sunday meetings of council and what men called the cabinet, which had often been held in the past and would often be held in the future. Further: "He saies, *He was a* Locksmith, *and a* Minister *too;* I warrant ye then he is an able man, and can make keyes for the *Cabinet Councell at Oxford.*" [73] This was undoubtedly in allusion to the small group of councillors with the king whom men still called the cabinet council, as in past years they had named the small group of his principal advisers. In 1646 the committee of both kingdoms ordered that it be reported to both houses of parliament "That One who came from *Oxford* on the 20th Instant saith, That he heard there, that the King should tell the Junto on *Saturday* last, That He would come to *London,* though He were shot to Death as soon as He came there." [74] Three years later Milton answering the *Eikon Basilike,* of Charles I, as he thought, spoke of "the politic Cabin at *Whitehall*", and with reference to the Nineteen Propositions of 1642 said: "whereas he blames those propositions for not containing what they ought, what did they mention, but to vindicate and *restore the Rights of Parlament invaded* by Cabin councels"? [75]

The term was now well enough known in ordinary parlance, and was used not merely with reference to a small body serving the king. In March 1648 a correspondent wrote that "the Cabinet counsall men" were busy and distracted, his letter not making it clear to what counsellors he referred.[76] In December 1649 a preacher declared that "*The most secret Cabinet-designes of mans heart are all unlocked and clearly anatomized before the Lord.*"[77] About this time an author who may have stated his own opinion or represented what had been said by John Selden and associates, described very well constitutional development of the era preceding:[78]

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[73] *Mercurius Britanicus,* 22 July 1644.

[74] *Lords' Journals,* viii. 122.

[75] *Eikonoklastes,* in *Works,* iii.. 364, 425.

[76] Letter of —— to Lord Lanark, 14/24 March 1647-8: *Hamilton Papers, Addenda* (*Camden Miscellany,* ix, Camden Society, new series, liii), p. 25.

> The sense of State once contracted into a *Privy Council,* is soon recontracted into a *Cabinet-Council,* and last of all into a *Favourite* or *two;* which many times brings damage to the publick, and both themselves and Kings into extreme *praecipices.*

There were those who spoke of cabinet council also in Cromwell's time. In 1655 one writing from Jamaica and recounting administration of the English army in the West Indies, declared that he had on no occasion taken part in any important council of war, but that "here is one Coll. Holdepp that is of the Cabinet Council".[79] In the next year one of the correspondents of the royalist Sir Edward Nicholas wrote in answer to an inquiry "concerning Cromwells cheife counsellors":

> I cannot tell how hee now orders his Counsell but w$^{n}$ I was in Engld I was assurd (and that by a good hand) that St John's and Thurlow (who was S$^{t}$ Johns his Clerke, and by him preferd to Cromwell) wt$^{h}$ Laurence the President of his Counsell, and Nath: Fines brought in by Laurence, were of his Cabinet . . .

also sometimes one of the Pierponts was admitted, "though not of the Counsell".[80]

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[77] British Museum, Thomas Watson, *Gods Anatomy upon Mans Heart, or, a Sermon Preached by Order of the Honorable House of Commons,* etc. (London, 1649), p. 4.

[78] Nathaniel Bacon, *An Historical and Political Discourse of the Laws and Government of England,* etc. (ed. 1739), p. 201.

[79] Letter of Francis Barrington to ——, 14 July 1655: *Lowndes MSS., H. M. C.,* 7th report, appendix, p. 575.

[80] T. Ross to [Secretary Nicholas], Paris, 29 December/8 January 1655-6: S. P. D., Interregnum, cii. 76.

Charles Stuart in exile was said to have his cabinet council even as he had a privy council. In 1656 Nicholas wrote to a correspondent asking whether a certain one was at the Hague: there was a report that he had gone to Flanders. This Nicholas could not believe, "though he is more of the secret council than I am, being a great confid$^{t}$ of Hyde's". He hoped the trust might not be misplaced, but it was unwise, he said, to make those not sworn to be secret privy to secrets of state, besides giving great discontent to the sworn counsellors. In another letter shortly after with respect to the same person he wrote: "I know nothing of O'Neale's negotiations or imploym$^{ts}$, & conceaue it possible he (being of the Cabinet) may goe for Flanders." [81] Later on one of the correspondents of Nicholas wondered that anyone would trust an important secret to Lord Newcastle; "nor can wee conjecture w$^{ch}$ way, hee should haue it, unless by some of M$^{r}$ Yorton's [duke of York's] people, who now talke as if they were of the Cabinett." [82]

After the Restoration mention of the cabinet council is increasingly frequent, until by the end of the century it has no more significance than mention of any well-recognized and well established thing. In 1663 Pepys, after speaking of favorite counsellors who swayed the king, wrote: "My Lord Albemarle, I hear, do bear through and bustle among them, and will not be removed from the King's good opinion and favour, though none of the Cabinett; but yet he is envied enough." [83] In 1670 Viscount Fauconberg describing the government of Venice in a report to Charles II upon his mission to Italy, said that the council of ten then consisted of seventeen: "This councill is exactly of the nature of our Cabinet Councills as they are now used in England, France, Spayne, etc., with two differences. First, the Duke enters not but when sent unto; secondly, they have infinitely more authority to heare and determine the very greatest things."[84] Next year the Venetian ambassador declared that Prince Rupert was of the English cabinet.[85] In 1673 one of Sir Joseph Williamson's correspondents informed him that every one was talking about how on the day previous "after the Cabinett Councell" the duke of York had resigned his several places and commands.[86] In December 1677 a diarist noted that people were discussing the next session of parliament: it was generally thought they would oppose his majesty's designs, "by teazing their Speaker, and labouring to dispossesse him of his chair, as being not only a Privy Councellor, but frequently admitted to the Cabinet Councill".[87]

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[81] Secretary Nicholas to Joseph Jane, Cologne, 4/14, 21/31 March 1655-6: S. P. D., Interregnum, cxxv. 4, 54.

[82] Thomas Ross to Secretary Nicholas, 24 February/6 March 1657-8: S. P. Foreign, Flanders, xxxii. 40.

[83] *Diary,* 15 May 1663.

As the opposition to Charles II drew on to its crisis "a Cabinet" was blamed by the commons for the trouble, "a Caball not established by Law".[88] Shortly before the reform of the privy council Secretary Coventry said that the earl of Essex was not only commissioner of the treasury but "of the Cabinet Councill".[89] About that very time Sir Robert Southwell noted that the privy council was to be reduced to such number and so composed "as not to need any Cabinet of such model as hath been before." [90] It was not long, however, before a cabinet council reappeared. Lord Keeper Guilford says that he was soon summoned "to the Cabinett".[91] In 1681 the prince of Orange was informed that there were some "in the cabinet council" who desired to see a breach between Charles II and himself.[92] In 1683 Evelyn declares that some in the Rye House Plot were said to have been for killing the king, others for only seizing him and persuading him to new counsels, on pretence of the danger of popery should the duke live to succeed, "who was now again admitted to the councils and cabinet seacrets".[93] Next year an applicant could not see the duke of York, who was late "at Cabinet Councill".[94] In 1685 the Dutch ambassador wrote back that he had not yet had opportunity to bring matters before the king and the lords of the cabinet.[95] As before, however, the cabinet, though, well recognized, had no formal position in the government of the kingdom. In the account which Lord Guilford, the lord keeper, wrote "of the p$^{r}$sent English Governem$^{t}$" he gave a long discussion of king and of parliament, but nothing of the cabinet council.[96]

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[84] *H. M. C., Manuscripts in Various Collections*, ii. 220.

[85] "Il principe Ruberto . . . e pure ammesso al consiglio di stato, anzi alla confidenza del Gabinetto." Piero Mocenigo, Relazione d'Inghilterra: Venetian Transcripts, cxi, pages not numbered; Add. MS. 10171, fo. 11.

[86] Robert Yard to Sir Joseph Williamson, Whitehall, 16 June 1673: *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson* (Camden Society, new series, viii), p. 44.

[87] *Diary of Dr. Edward Lake* (Camden Society, xxxix), pp. 15, 16.

[88] S. P. D., Charles II, cccciii, 7 May 1678.

[89] Letter to the duke of Ormonde, 8 April 1679: Add. MS. 25125, fo. 62.

Shortly after his accession James II is mentioned as coming from his "Cabinet Councill", or going there.[97]

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[90] Memorandum on Public Affairs: *H.M.C., Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. p. xx.

[91] Add. MS. 32520, fo. 251.

[92] Letter of Mr. Sidney to the prince of Orange, 28 June 1681: Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, etc., ii, part ii, p. 9.

[93] *Diary*, 28 June 1683.

[94] The earl of Moray to the duke of Queensberry, Whitehall, 13 December 1684: *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig*, ii. 37.

[95] "Syne Maj$^{t}$ en de heeren van het cabinet". Van Citters to the states general, Westminster, 26 December/5 January 1684-5: Add. MS. 17677 GG, fo. 178.

[96] Add. MS. 32520, fos. 133-157.

[97] Earl of Moray to the duke of Queensberry, Whitehall, 4, 14 July 1685: *Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig*, ii. 84, 86.

Early in 1686, when English fishermen had been carried away from Rye by French boats, Barillon wrote to the king of France about discussion of the matter in the cabinet council.[98] Later that year the Dutch ambassador speaks of three lords of the king's cabinet council in Scotland.[99] Not long after, recounting changes which men affirmed the king would make in the ministry, he reported it said that Lord Powis, once put in the Tower, would be admitted to the cabinet council.[100] In 1687, when Rochester had been dismissed from his office of lord treasurer, Barillon wrote that he had returned to court and had even been at privy council, but was apparently excluded from the council of the cabinet.[101] In the last troublous days before James II departed from England several letters of Pepys speak of meetings of the cabinet.[102]

After the Revolution the cabinet was mentioned more and more often. In 1689 it was attacked in parliament, as it had been before. In a debate in the commons a speaker said: "I know not how to take notice of the

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[98] Letter of 31 January 1686 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxvi. 253. "On a parlé au Conseil du Cabinet": letter of 4 February 1686, *ibid.*, fo. 255.

[99] "Alle dry van des Conings Cabinet raet in Schotlandt." Van Citters to the states general, 23 April 1686 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 GG. fo. 565.

[100] "Men discoureert te Hoven . . . van de apparente veranderinge die den Coningh in het ministerium soude voor hebben te maken, en dat den Lord Powis, die eenige jaeren benevens de andere Paepse Lords, in den Tower gevanckelyck heeft geseten, wel in een der voornaemste employen coude geraecken en daer enboven in het Cabinet Conseil geadmitteert werden." Letter of 6/16 July 1686: *ibid.*, fo. 635.

[101] "Il s'estoit flatté depuis quelques jours de pouvoir estre encore du conseil du Cabinet, mais selon ce que j'en puis sçavoir, il en demeure exclu". Letter to Louis XIV, 27 January 1687 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxviii. 120.

[102] "I am just come from attending his Majestie at the Cabinet". Letter to Lord Dartmouth, 29 October 1688: *Dartmouth MSS., H. M. C.*, 11th report, appendix, v. 178. "The freshest tideings wee have . . . came this night while the King was at the Cabinet". Letter of 8 November 1688: *ibid.*, p. 188.

Cabinet-Council, nor what it means; I know not whether it be a lawful Council; I know not whether it be a crime to be a Cabinet-Counsellor, but I would desire the King to deliver us from those that were Counsellors then, that we may be troubled with them no more."[103] They would know who were the councillors when Lord Russell was tried and when the new borough charters were given. In a confused passage one of the members urged that the house must seek those who had really held the power: "we must go to the visible Council; the Committee of Trade, the Cabinet-Council . . . Charge them, and they will accuse one another."[104] Another "would know who were of the Council at dissolving the *Oxford* Parliament (and who of the Cabinet, if possible), when Papers were to have been put into Protestant Pockets, to have them knocked on the Head."[105]

According to the earl of Halifax, William at the beginning of his reign agreed that a cabinet council was necessary, though he—preferring doubtless to hold management of all important things in his own hands, declared he did not believe men would speak freely before one another.[106] In 1691 the earl of Dartmouth noted that the queen had ordered a "Cabinet Councell" to be held.[107]

In 1691 members of the house of commons were again speaking strongly against the cabinet.[108] Next year, when William asked the advice of parliament, there was a debate in the commons in course of which it was said that the king had bad counsellors, that it was impossible to know who gave him advice so long as there was a cabinet council or cabal distinct from the privy council. The king should consult only his privy council.[109] "I doubt not", said one, "but the King sees that private men, called a Cabal, have led him into some Errors, and calls for your Advice; which is the best thing he could do . . . In intermissions of Parliament, Kings have consulted with their Privy-Councils; formerly they went not into lesser Cabals." [110] "I cannot tell where it is we are wounded", said another. "I would not have the management in such hands for the future; but this cannot be while we have a Cabinet-Council." [111] Sir Richard Temple, however, defended current usage: "All Governments reduce their Council to a few: *Holland* does; and the *French* King to three." [112] But an opponent asserted that the mode of "this Cabinet" was not the method nor the practice of England. All kings did have their favorites, and he wished that his majesty had such a secretary as Mazarin, to secure the interest of the nation. "The method is this", he said, with respect to the custom in England, "things are concerted in the Cabinet, and then brought to the Council; such a thing resolved in the Cabinet, and brought and put upon them, for their Assent, without showing any of the Reasons. That has not been the method of *England*." [113] In which the speaker was mistaken; there had been much of it for three score years.

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[103] Anchitell Grey, *Debates of the House of Commons, from the Year 1667 to the Year 1694,* etc. (London, 1763), ix. 307.

[104] *Ibid.,* p. 306.

[105] *Ibid.,* p. 313.

[106] Spencer House Journals, 23 January 1689-90: Foxcroft, *Life of Halifax,* ii. 244.

[107] Lord Dartmouth's Memorandums, 13 July 1691: *Dartmouth MSS.,* v. 286.

[108] Newsletter, London, 3/13 November 1691: *Denbigh MSS., H. M. C.,* 7th report, appendix, p. 205.

In 1694 during a debate in the commons on the king's veto of the place bill there was one who said: "King *Charles* the 1st was the first that set up the Cabinet, but he was taken down for it; so was King *James*, his son, and made a vagabond."[114] Another declared blame should not be upon the king, there must be some evil private council, "since I hear from those of the Council, and those of the Cabinet, that they know nothing of this Answer."[115] To him, at all events, the cabinet may have appeared as a regularly used if not formally recognized institution. About the end of the year an anonymous adviser who gave interesting suggestions to William with respect to council and committees of council, proposed also—doubtless just after the death of Mary, that a regency be established during his absence from the kingdom; it should be like that formerly used several times, "only with the difference, that, instead of being called a Cabinet Councell, they must have a Commission to be Lieutenants or Regents".[116] After the end of the seventeenth century there is so much about the cabinet council that non-appearance of the term rather than appearance would excite curiosity in the student.

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[109] Grey, x. 252-279.

[110] *Ibid.*, pp. 265, 266.

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

[112] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

[113] Grey, x. 278, 279.

In 1701 the author of a pamphlet expressed what was then a general feeling:[117]

> And here it may be observed, that an Error has formerly Crept into this Part of our Constitution; and that is, *By Determining Matters of the highest Importance without Advising with any of the Established Councils.* The original of which, in the late Reigns, seems to be derived from the Precedent of *France,* where it was first invented as an Introduction to an Arbitrary Government; and 'tis to be doubted, that they were no true Friends to the Constitution of this Government, who first brought that evil Custom into *England.*

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[114] *Ibid.*, p. 376.

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 385.

[116] S. P. D., King William's Chest, xiii. 10.

[117] [Sir Humphrey Mackworth], *A Vindication of the Rights of the Commons of England* (London, 1701), p. 16.

> 'Tis true, former Princes did sometimes Advise with particular Persons, before they offered a Matter to the Council to be Debated and Determined; but it's an Innovation by Evil Ministers, that War and Peace, and Matters of the highest Consequences, should be finally Concluded in a *Secret Cabal,* and only pass through the *Privy-Council* for Forms sake, as a Conduit-Pipe, to Convey those Resolutions with Authority to the People.
>
> All Proclamations, for Declaring War, &c. are constantly set forth in the Name of the *King,* with *Advice of his* Council, (which shews that it ought to be so) when, perhaps, the War was Resolved in a *Private Cabal,* and only Declared in a *Privy-Council,* and Published with that Authority to the People; which is an Abuse of the Constitution.
>
> 'Tis therefore a Noble Resolution in His Majesty, to Restore to *England* the Practice of their Ancient Constitution, to Repair the Breaches and Innovations brought in upon them in the late Reigns, and not only to Declare, but Debate and Transact all Matters of State in the *Privy-Council.*

It may be added that in course of time cabinet council was spoken of as cabinet merely. For the earliest part of the seventeenth century not enough evidence survives to make it certain whether the " cabinet council " was borrowed as a phrase from France, or even Italy, for meetings of the king's principal councillors, or whether in England also the term arose because of meetings of the sovereign's principal councillors in one of his cabinets or rooms. On the whole it would appear that at this time the phrase was borrowed and applied especially to the committee of foreign affairs. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, however, there are numerous allusions to audiences given by the king in cabinet or closet, and even to meetings of his councillors there. Sometimes one cannot be certain from the record whether the term "cabinet" is meant to designate a room or a small council. After a while "cabinet" is unmistakably applied to the principal ministers who are otherwise called "the lords of the committee". In the eighteenth century "cabinet" gradually supersedes the longer term "cabinet council".

In March 1679 there was trouble with respect to choice of a speaker by the house of commons, "which gave occasion for a meeting last night at the Cabinet".[118] In 1684 the French ambassador wrote that Charles took him into his cabinet and gave him account of what he had resolved.[119] Two years later a correspondent said the earl of Tyrconnel came "out from the Cabinet" much perturbed.[120] In 1688 the Dutch ambassador reported that the French ambassador had just been for a long time alone with the king in his cabinet.[121] Shortly after he said that Seymour, former speaker of the commons, had had a long conversation with the king in the cabinet.[122] In October Pepys wrote to Lord Dartmouth: "That nothing might be wanting that might contribute ought to the quickening the victuallers, I moved his Majesty to require their attendance on him this night at the Cabinet, where accordingly they were".[123] Here one cannot be certain whether king's closet or his select council is meant, though probably Pepys is referring to the cabinet council. A week later he wrote that upon his motion James had been pleased to have the commissioners for victualling before him that evening " at the Cabinett ".[124] During the voyage of the prince of Orange and after his arrival in England Pepys frequently met James to give information about the fleet. Apparently these meetings were in a room in the king's palace called " cabinet ", but apparently those who attended were known as the " cabinet " also.[125]

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[118] Sir Robert Southwell to the duke of Ormonde, 8 March 1678-9: *H.M.C., Ormonde MSS.,* new series, iv. 498.

[119] Barillon to Louis XIV, Windsor, 4 September 1684: Transcripts from Paris, clix. 313.

[120] Letter to John Ellis, 4 December 1686: *Ellis Correspondence* (London, 1829), i. 206.

[121] "By den Coningh in syn cabinet": Van Citters to the states general, Westminster, 27 February 1688: Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 341.

[122] "In het cabinet". Letter of 11 June 1688: *ibid.,* fo. 427.

[123] Letter of 7 October 1688: *Dartmouth MSS.,* v. 147.

In England by that time custom was tending towards employment of " closet " for the small room in which the king held private consultations. Foreigners still called it cabinet in accordance with usage abroad. Apparently the king's select advisers or the cabinet council now met on occasion in the king's closet. In 1686 a certain one wrote that he had showed a letter of the duke of Queensberry to the duke of York, who caused it to be read " in the Inglish Councell, in the King's closet." [126] In 1688 Pepys told the earl of Dartmouth: " I had fully determined with my self to accost the King upon it in the bedchamber itself at his comeing out of his closett, had not his late stay there, with the generall officers, urged him to pass the chamber in great hast down to the Cabinet." [127]

During the seventeenth century the student observes increasing use of two other terms, " junto ", and especially " cabal ", to designate a small group of important advisers of the king. Either of these terms might be used, and, like the term " cabinet " often was used to designate any small body or secret group, but there are many instances of the use of either or both to denote that small council or group of the king's most important advisers was more and more known as the " cabinet council ".

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[124] Letter of 14 October 1688: *ibid.*, p. 159.

[125] Pepys to Dartmouth, 7, 14, 29 October, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 November 1688: *Dartmouth MSS.*, v. 147, 159, 178, 179, 188, 189, 191, 193, 196.

[126] John Drummond to the duke of Queensberry, London, 3 January 1685-6: *Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig*, ii. 203.

[127] Letter of 29 October 1688: *Dartmouth MSS.*, v. 179.

"Cabal" had particular notoriety in the time of Charles II. Afterwards the name was believed to have had origin in the initial letters of the names of five councillors—Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, Lauderdale.[128] But this was an error into which earlier writers had not fallen.[129] The word was no more than a derivative of the Hebrew *qabbalah*—mystic doctrine or secret lore. Like *cabinet* it probably came over from French into English usage about the beginning of the seventeenth century to describe a small group acting in secret and then a small, secret council.

In 1618 the French ambassador wrote about the Spanish cabal in England.[130] In 1621 another French communication spoke of the "cabal of the Puritans in parliament".[131] In 1628 a certain "Philopistis", writing to the earl of Carlisle, warned him of the machinations of "the cappelet or Cabbal".[132] In 1630 a report read to Charles I, said, in respect of the French and the Catholics, that "they do and will labour tooth and nail to make a cabal both in England, Scotland, and Ireland, for their parts as well with the laics as with the priests and jesuits ".[133] Some years later a correspondent wrote that a great lady, who was a professed opponent of Richelieu, was hourly expected in England, " being fled out of France for being of the Queen of France's cabal ".[134] In 1648, a " caball " was spoken of; [135] and four years later a royalist " caball " in Edinburgh.[136]

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[128] "The going into the *Measures* of a *Set of Men,* who from the *innitial Letters* of their Names, were called the CABAL, was the *utter Ruin* of the *King's Affairs*". *The Conduct of the Ministry Compared with Its Consequences,* etc. (London, 1733), p. 30. See also, for example, the eighteenth-century note to Grey, *Debates,* ii. 257.

[129] For example, Burnet, recounting afterwards the principal events of 1672 wrote: "Lord Clifford was made lord treasurer; lord Arlington and lord Lauderdale had both of them the garter: and, as Arlington was made an earl, Lauderdale was made a duke: and this junto, together with the duke of Buckingham, being called the cabal, it was observed, that *cabal* proved a technical word, every letter in it being the first letter of those five, Clifford, Ashly, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale." *History of His Own Time* (Oxford, 1823), i. 308.

[130] "Il a parlé encores de quelques autres qui seront desgraciez, lesquels, à ce que l'on dit, sont aussi de la Cabale Espagnole, laquelle, a ce que je puis voir s'affoiblist grandement." Transcripts from Paris, lii. 274. Also another communication of 1622: *ibid.,* lvi. 16.

[131] *Ibid.,* lv. 232.

[132] S. P. D., Charles I, cxviii, 11/21 October 1628.

In the year following the Restoration a correspondent told Joseph Williamson that he had " a little examined the Caballs of o$^{r}$ Grandees".[137] Next year report of a seditious discourse alleged one to have said " that *the King did not mind Government, but his Mistresses, & that all was carryed on by the Queen, & her Caball at Somerset house. That Popery was coming in.*" [138] In an undated poem Andrew Marvell wrote: [139]

The close cabal mark'd how the navy eats,
And thought all lost that goes not to the cheats.

In 1663 the earl of Dumfries was reported as very busy in " making a caball ", several meetings having been held in a tavern.[140] Four years afterward Pepys was told that the fault of the duke of Buckingham was " his being of a caball " with some discontented ones of the late house of commons, and opposing the desires of the king in the commons.[141] " I had information that there had been caballing ", Lauderdale wrote to Charles II two years later.[142]

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[133] *Coke MSS., H.M.C.*, 12th report, appendix, i. 399.

[134] Letter of 30 September 1637: *De La Warr MSS., H.M.C.*, 4th report, appendix, p. 293.

[135] " *Asburneham* and the rests of his caball are designed ": James Fenn to Edward Edgar, 23 February 1647-8: *Hamilton Papers* (Camden Society, new series, xxvii), p. 157.

[136] " Those who most frequently mett was E. Dunfermeline, L$^{d}$ Belcarese, S$^{r}$ James H.[alkett] S$^{r}$ G. Mackery of Tarbott, who S$^{r}$ R. Moray had a great opinion of . . . and brought him into there caball ". *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett* (Camden Society, new series, xiii), p. 80.

[137] Letter of N. Chyles, 24 February 1660-1: S. P. D., Charles II, xxxi.

[138] S. P. D., Charles II, lxi, 31 October 1662.

[139] " Instructions to a Painter ", *Works* (London, 1776), iii, 369.

[140] The earl of Lauderdale to Sir Robert Moray, 27 June 1663: *Lauderdale Papers,* i. (Camden Society, new series, xxxiv), p. 139.

During all this time the term had been as frequently employed to denote a faction or a party as a small group. After the Restoration, however, it was used especially to designate some small group of confederates or councillors. In 1665 an information about a certain one declared: " he hath been . . . *an Agent for the Fanatiques,* and dissafected party in Forraign parts, and is of their secret Councell . . . this Sykes, knoweth all the secrets of the Cabale, is of their secret Councell ".[143] During these years what Carendon described as the " foreign committee " is several times referred to by Pepys as " cabinet " or " cabal ". The group, then, that was known particularly as the cabal in 1672, was merely one of the cabals to which contemporaries had referred. Apparently it was not, unless merely for a short time, a group of five councillors merely, but contemporaries singled out the five most prominent members of the committee of foreign affairs, partly also, it would seem, because their initial letters spelled the word already in use; and this particular cabal was afterwards best remembered. In 1674 Lord Conway told the earl of Essex that a cabal was kept at Lord Hollis's house, that Halifax and Shaftesbury were of it, and that Buckingham had recently been admitted.[144]

As " cabal " came seemingly through the French, so " junto " came from the Spanish. By the beginning of the seventeenth century *junta* was generally used in Spanish to designate a body or group assembled—a council, committee, or any body large or small. In 1614 Gondomar reported that he told James I he understood a privy councill was to be assembled (que Juntaba un gran Consejo).[145] In 1619 a Spanish report declared that a meeting or committee (Junta) had been held in the house of the lord chancellor, where enforcement of the laws against Roman Catholics was dealt with.[146]

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[141] *Diary,* 3 March 1666-7.

[142] Letter of 22 October 1669: *Lauderdale Papers,* ii. 143.

[143] S. P. D., Charles II, cxxxv, 21 October 1665.

[144] Letter of 27 January 1673-4: *Essex Papers,* i. (Camden Society, new series, xlvii), p. 168.

During this time, when Spanish literature was so much admired and imitated in England, Spanish words were being borrowed, aften with change of a terminal " a " to an " o ", which contemporaries, apparently thought to have more of Spanish appearance. Among them was *junta,* which became in English usage " junto " or " juncto ", meaning a committee, or a small council, or a small group. In 1624 after Buckingham had given to both houses of parliament an account of the journey to Spain, the chancellor of the exchequer, speaking in the commons with respect to the king of Spain's oath that he would enforce the arrangement, mentioned "A Juncto of Divines, to consider, whether the King of *Spaine* might take this Oath." [147] In 1631 a guest was sumptuously feasted at the Cockpit by the lord chamberlain, " with the same junta of guests " that others had been entertaining.[148] Generally in the time of Charles I, when men spoke of the " junto " without other description and in reference to important members of his council, they meant the committee of the privy council for foreign affairs, which they were also calling " cabinet council ". In 1639, when the inner group of the privy council was giving itself particularly to consideration of Scots affairs, under the name then of Scottish committee, it was the Scottish committee that contemporaries described as " cabinet " or " junto ". In October of that year a smaller group still more powerful and still deeper in the secrets of the king's councils, was also spoken of as " junto ". " There is ane othere littell *Junto* that is mutch apprehended hear, of which there is but three, the Bishope, and *Hambleton,* and Deputy.[149] In 1645 a correspondent wrote of one who gave notice of whatever happened at court, " worthy the knowledg of the Junto " at Oxford.[150] One of Prynne's numerous writings was against what he called the Westminster junto.[151]

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[145] Letter to the king of Spain, 7 October 1614 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, series ii, viii.

[146] " Una Junta que se tubo en casa del Chanciller ". Letter to the King of Spain, 17 January 1619: Spanish Transcripts, series ii, viii. 43.

[147] *Commons' Journals,* i. 720.

[148] Rowland Woodward to Francis Windebank, 17 February 1630-1: S. P. D., Charles I, clxxxv.

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[149] The countess of Carlisle to the earl of Leicester, 17 October 1639: *Sydney Papers,* ii. 614.

[150] Edward Walsingham to George Lord Digby, 16 August 1645: S. P. D., Charles I, dx. 65.

[151] *Arraignment, Conviction, and Condemnation of the Westmonasterian Junctoe's Engagement* (London, 1650).

# CHAPTER X

## CONSEIL DE CABINET IN FRANCE

AT THE beginning of the seventeenth century in Christian Europe the three principal states with strong central governments were Spain, France and England. In the fundamental parts of the structure of their governments an outsider might see much resemblance. In each of them control was vested primarily in a sovereign who had or was supposed to have the principal functions in governing the realm. In each case the sovereign's powers were limited more or less by rights of nobility, corporations, or old vested interests, but Elizabeth, Henry IV, Philip II had each of them wielded executive and administrative powers and had much to do with securing of revenue and with legislation. In each case the ruler alone was unable to cope with the vast amount of governmental work and routine, so that each was assisted as a matter of course by trusted councillors and officials who under the sovereign actually did most of the ordinary work and often had part in the most important things that were done. In Spain, indeed, governmental work had partly broken down because Philip II insisted on reserving for his own supervision far more than one person could manage. In each country, however, the central government was primarily a monarchical system in which the crown, the principal organ, was assisted by councillors and officials appointed by the sovereign and subordinate to him.

That part of conciliar development in England which gave rise to the cabinet council appears in its earlier stages so faint and indistinct that there may always remain some uncertainty about what the English cabinet was at first and exactly how it came to be. Before a cabinet group is certainly known to have existed in England

Bacon said that cabinet councils had been introduced by the doctrine of Italy and the practice of France, and Raleigh about the same time declared that a cabinet council was needed in every state. Cabinet in this sense was apparently still for the most part a foreign term at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Where Frenchmen said " cabinet " then an Englishman was more apt to say " closet "; and in a later stage of the history of the cabinet, during a part of the eighteenth century, " closet "—a small room in which the king consulted his most trusted and important advisers—was much what cabinet had been a century before. So, it may be instructive to examine conciliar development and practice in Spain and in France about the time when cabinet council first appears in England.

Of Spain not much need be said. There by the end of the sixteenth century conciliar development had taken a direction that has some slight resemblance to the old separation of function in England among curia regis, exchequer, chancery, and great courts of common law, but was altogether unlike the development of the council in England during the sixteenth century. Under Elizabeth and James I there was the one privy council with its other aspect the Court of Star Chamber. Beneath it were certain subordinate councils. In privy council was done all the important conciliar business of the central government, of whatever kind. In Spain in the time of Philip II there were several small councils—eleven or twelve. They were all of them directly subordinate to the king. In his earlier years, at least, he did not attend their meetings, but caused memoranda of business to be laid before him. Important matters were largely dealt with by the monarch in his own chamber, and communications were sent thence by his secretary to the proper council.[1] In the various councils, as of Castile, of the Indies, of state, of war, were done the various kinds of governmental work that in England would all have been done in the one privy council. Under the king diplomacy and foreign affairs were dealt with in the *Consexo de estado.* This council of state, like the English committee of the council for foreign affairs tended to be increasingly important. In 1595 the Venetian ambassador wrote that Philip came every day. There were six members. All matters were dealt with most secretly there.[2] In the early part of the eighteenth century the central government of Spain was reorganized after French models to bring greater concentration of power with increased effectiveness into the hands of a small group of ministers.[3] Outsiders, at least, now spoke of the cabinet council in Spain.[4]

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[1] Leopold von Ranke, *Fürsten und Völker von Süd-Europa,* etc. (Berlin, 1837), i. 152, 155.

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[2] "Il consiglio di stato . . . e di questo è capo il principe, che entra ogni giorno in esso, sebbene vi si ferma poco. Gli altri poi che vi entrano, sono il cardenale Alberto, il conte di Fuensalida, il marchese di Velada, il duca di Chincon, don Christoforo di Mora, e don Giovanni Idiaquez . . . Tutte le materie poi che si trattano in questo consiglio passano con incredibile segretezza, cosi quelle di poca come quelle di molta considerazione." Relazione di Spagna di Francesco Vendramino (1595): Eugenio Albèri, *Le Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato durante il Secolo Decimosesto* (Florence, 1859-63), 1st series, v. 460.

[3] Half a century before such a scheme had been tried. In 1665 a correspondent wrote: " Your Grace knows long ago the death of the king of *Spain,* and the leaving the Government there intirely to the Queen's hands, assisted with 6 Counsellors, the Archbishop of *Toledo,* the Inquisitor General, the *Conde de Castilla,* the Vice Chancellor of *Arragon,* the Marquis Daytona, and the *Conde de Peneranda; Don Juan de Austria,* and the Duke *de Medina de las Torres* remaining excluded, and the Council, being thus united by these and many other circumstances the Government is certainly much stronger than it was before." Henry Bennet to the Duke of Ormonde, Oxford, 12 October 1665: T. Brown, *Miscellanea Aulica: or, a Collection of State-Treaties, Never Before Published* (London, 1702), p. 363.

[4] A memorandum of information to the British government in 1724 concerning " Nomination du Roy d'Espagne des Conseillers de son Cabinet pour traiter avec les Ministres des Cours etrangers a Madrid ": the marquis de Lede—England, Holland; the president of Castile—

In France conciliar development had been not unlike that in England. In the sixteenth century, as in Spain, the different services of the government had tended to be organized apart, but the tendency had not been carried far. The *conseil du roi* came to be known as the *conseil privé*. Of this council the *conseil des parties*—predominantly judicial, and the *conseil des finances*—primarily having to do with revenue and finance, were both of them aspects or meetings of the members thereof. Gradually there was some differentiation of function and of names. After 1578 the *conseil privé* was the designation especially of the *conseil des parties* beside which was now the *conseil d'état* concerned rather with advisory and administrative functions. There was no distinction, however, between the members of one and the members of the others: they were all of them *conseillers au conseil d'état et privé*. In 1582 a *section des finances*, consisting of nine members, was established.[5]

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, when Henry IV came to the throne the *conseil* had not split up into autonomous bodies, independent one of the other, each with distinct personnel. Rather distinction was made according to the day of sitting, and according to the nature of the business transacted—as was the case in England with privy council and court of Star Chamber. There were *conseil privé ou des parties* and *conseil d'état et des finances*. They were composed of the same members, and each of them was *conseil du roi*.[6] Henry IV reduced the

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France; the inquisitor general—Portugal; the archbishop of Toledo—Venice; Don Miguel Guerra—Muscovy, Parma; the president of the Indies—the papal nuncio. Newcastle Papers: Add. MS. 32738, fos. 139, 140.

[5] Cf. J. H. Mariéjol in Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, vi, part i. 220, 221.

[6] In 1606 the ambassador in London wrote to " Monsieur de Villeroy, Conseiller du Roy en ses Conseils ", and a little later he addressed him

number of this council to twelve effective members, though others might have the title.[7] Apparently it was not long before the number of nominal councillors, at all events was increased.

Meanwhile, in the time of Henry IV at latest had appeared a smaller and more effective body of councillors above the *conseil du roi.* Into this group the king admitted only his most intimate confidants and most important servants—such as Sully, Pomponne de Bellièvre, Sillery, and Villeroy. This group met apart with the king in his gallery or walked about with him in his garden.[8] Sometimes Henry conferred with his principal advisers in one of the rooms or *cabinets* of his residence.[9] In 1608 the king sent a messenger to summon Sully to come to the Louvre at once. There in the small cabinet of the queen Henry conferred with three of his principal ministers.[10] A year later he made a plan for the king in which he suggested that a large chest of drawers should be made for the king's small library (*cabinet des livres*) in the Louvre, in which should be put various letters, books,

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as "conseiller du Roy en tous ses conseils": Letters of M. de la Fontaine, London, 20 October, 16 December 1606 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, xli. In the next year he addressed "Monsieur de Pysieux, conseiller du Roy en son Conseil d'Estat", and on another occasion as "conseiller du Roy en tous ses conseilz." Letters of the same, 2, 23 January 1607 (N. S.): *ibid.*

[7] Lavisse, vi, part ii. 26, 27.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] In 1597 Sully gave advice to the king "sortant de son cabinet": Sully, *Mémoires* (ed. Petitot, 1820), vi. 366. In 1603 a number of councillors met to treat with the ambassadors of the United Provinces in the cabinet at Sully's lodging. "Le lendemain, tous les conseillers cy-devant nommez pour traiter avec vous au nom du Roy leur maistre et les ambassadeurs des Provinces Unies se rendirent pour la seconde fois a vostre logis et fustes encore plus de trois heures enfermez tous ensemble dans vostre cabinet." *Mémoires,* iv. 379, 380.

[10] "Arrivant au Louvre, vous trouvastes le Roy dans le petit cabinet de la Reine, où il avoit long-temps que messieurs de Sillery et Ville-roy estoient arrivez": *ibid.*, vii. 384.

state papers and documents relating to the government.[11] From time to time, in his account, Henry is mentioned as receiving various persons and doing various items of business in this cabinet. In 1609 the Venetian ambassador in France wrote back that the ambassador of Savoy had had an audience with the king in the cabinet of the queen.[12] Frequently reference is made to the differences and the intrigues of cabinet and of court.[13]

Sully, favorite and most important minister of Henry IV, has left much information about his activities in the council of the king. He says that a *conseil d'estat et des finances* was held twice a week. Always he attended. From four o'clock in the morning, winter and summer, he worked in his own cabinet clearing away what awaited his attention. About seven o'clock he went to the council, where he remained until ten, sometimes until eleven. At one time Henry ordered that the council of state should assemble three times a week, morning and afternoon.[14] After a while Sully did not attend some of the morning councils, and he never went in the afternoon, because of his many administrative duties.[15] The other three days of the week, morning and evening, were appointed for meetings of the *conseil des parties.*[16] At meetings of the *conseil d'estat* might be present all the princes, dukes, peers, officers of the crown, provincial governors and lieutenants, and other gentlemen honored with commissions from the king.[17]

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[11] *Ibid.*, viii. 73.

[12] "L'ultima udienza che ebbe l'ambasciatore di Savoja gliela diede il re con favore straordinario nel gabinetto della regina." Despatch of Antonio Foscarini, 14 September 1609 (N.S.): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 2d series, i. 313.

[13] Writing of the year 1604 Sully says: "Or, nous estant revenu en memoire plusieurs broüilleries et intrigues de Cour, de chambre et de cabinet, qui se passerent cette année . . . nous eussions bien desiré de les vous ramentevoir": *Mémoires,* v. 211. In 1605: "Monsieur de Rohan . . . vous parla de plusieurs broüilleries domestiques de Cour et de cabinet, nouvellement survenuës": *ibid.,* vi. 291. After recounting his numerous duties he says: "Outre toutes lesquelles occupations, vous estiez souvent appellé pour demesler les intrigues et broüilleries domestiques de Cour et de cabinet": *ibid.,* p. 360.

[14] Sully, *Mémoires,* vi. 40, 359.

[15] *Ibid.,* pp. 359, 360.

Sully says that on occasion his master sent for him at nine or at ten o'clock in the morning, and walking sometimes alone with him, sometimes also with Villeroy and Sillery, and discoursing of his principal affairs, announced his resolutions, and gave to each one there according to his office commands to be carried out.[18] In another place he declares it was well known that the king communicated most of his business to three principal ministers of state.[19] In 1608 the Venetian ambassador said that the king of France was assisted by a council of seven, of whom three were the principal members.[20]

Henry IV had such care of all matters of state that nothing important was done without him. He wished to know about all things. There was no hour when one might not speak with him about business, even when he was at pleasure, providing the matter was important. Sometimes this would be in one of his rooms, often in his gardens. The account of the Venetian ambassador in

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[16] Sully, *Mémoires,* vi., p. 359.

[17] " Auquel tous les princes, ducs, pairs, officiers de la couronne, gouverneurs et lieutenans de Roy aux provinces, et autres gentils-hommes estans honorez de brevets du Roy, avoient libre entrée, sceance et voix déliberative ". Sully, *Mémoires,* vi. 359.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 41.

[19] " Nous dirons que plusieurs sçavoient bien que vous estiez trois principaux ministres d'Estat ausquels le Roy communicoit le plus des affaires d'iceluy." *Ibid.,* p. 358.

[20] " Il consiglio che il re riceve nelle cose più gravi ed importanti da suoi ministri è fondato sopra M. de Sillery, M. di Rosnì e M. di Villerey; nè altri hanno parte nelle grazie ed importanti deliberazioni se non accidentalmente." Informazione di Pietro Priuli (1608): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 2d series, i. 228.

1608 asserted that walking thus with his three principal ministers he transacted much.[21] A contemporary writing says that the time especially given by the king to consideration of business was in the morning before he went to mass, while walking in the gardens—for he loved exercise—or in a gallery, with his councillors. His secretaries of state were present also to give account of what had been committed to them, but they did not approach unless the king called them.[22]

Sully relates, apparently with respect to consultations about the recapture of Amiens after it had been surprised by the Spaniards in 1597, that he advised Henry to confide only in a few who were very secret and discreet. Thereupon the king having retired into his cabinet and calling to him only four confidants, a meeting was held. When the king had listened to various counsels, he approved plans which he resolved to communicate to his principal military men. Accordingly there was a council to which eleven were summoned. They having approved what was proposed to them, the king communicated his designs the next day to a general council (*conseil general*), to which, in addition to those previously named were called ten other councillors besides four secretaries of state and four intendants.[23]

A contemporary writing of the last year of Henry's reign says that he chose for the council with which he did all his important business five of his ministers—the chancellor, the president, Sully, Sillery, and Villeroy.[24] That year, just after Henry's death, another Venetian report said that there were three councils in France: a large one—the *consiglio delle partite* [*conseil privé*], a smaller one—the *consiglio delle finanze* [*conseil d'état*], and a third—the *consiglio degli affari.* In this last the most important matters of state were treated. It consisted of those whom it pleased the monarch to choose from the other councils. Under Henry IV it had contained very few—the chancellor, a secretary of state—Villeroy, and Sully. Later this council had been made larger. According to the account given in this report, it would seem that after the death of Henry there was a large council attending to all important affairs.[25]

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[21] "Tratta e risolve tutti gli affari importanti e ciò il più delle volte passeggiando ne' suoi giardini o altrove, col semplice consiglio dei tre soli ministri che sono il gran cancelliere, M. di Rosny e M. de Villeroy." *Ibid.*, p. 207.

[22] *Mémoires* de François Du Val, marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil (1610), in Michaud and Poujoulat, *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires,* v. 18. He says: "C'estoit là où il prenoit résolution de tout ce qui se devoit faire, et où il en donnoit l'ordre tant a ceux du conseil qu'aux secrétaires d'Estat". *Ibid.*

[23] Sully, *Mémoires,* vi. 366, 367, 375, 376.

Fontenay-Mareuil says that after the death of Henry IV the queen, following his example, took the morning for business, ordaining that the chancellor, Sully, Villeroy, and the president Jeannin, with the four secretaries of state, should come every day at eleven o'clock, to give account of what had passed, in the presence of the three princes of the blood. At first this was done in a large room (*un grand cabinet*); afterwards in another room beside the antechamber of the king. There the queen sat in a chair placed at the wall, the princes of the blood standing beside her, the councillors before her. But he adds that all persons of condition might enter, and often were summoned those with interest in what was discussed. After dinner there was another council for great and important matters that did not require much haste, at which the advice of a larger number was taken. That, however, was rather for form, and to content those who were of it—princes, dukes, and officers of the crown—

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[24] Fontenay-Mareuil, *Mémoires*, v. 18.

[25] Relazione di Andrea Gussoni e Agostino Nani (1610): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei*, 2d series, i. 463, 464.

than for any need of them. At the larger councils was brought up only what the ministers had agreed on previously with the queen.[26] According to another contemporary, in January 1611, when there had been a dispute about a matter, the queen desired to effect an accomodation. At her *levée* the constable and all the officers of the crown were present. There was long discussion; decision was postponed until after dinner. Then they went to the queen's cabinet, where also was the prince of Condé, and deliberation was resumed.[27]

It is evident, accordingly, that from time to time in the latter part of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century the crown was making use of a small group of varying number who constituted an informal body or an interior council, meeting apart with the king, to deal with weighty affairs in secret; that often it met in one of the king's rooms, and hence was sometimes known as *conseil de cabinet.* When Louis XIII began to govern he held his council at the Louvre in the *cabinet des livres* or in the *gallerie dorée,* or in the *chambre ovale* at Fontainebleau.[28] During that time writers mention the king's secret council, and they speak of meetings of his ministers in his cabinet. "On coming from the *conseil des dépesches*", says one of them, "the ministers went to the king's cabinet ".[29] He says also that a certain one greatly feared that Louis would admit Richelieu into his secret council.[30] Another says that when Luynes was introduced into the king's favor he had charge of the particular falcons of the king: they were thenceforth called birds of the cabinet.[31] In the time of Luynes an anonymous writer putting the chancellor L'Hospital into a dialogue, made him say that councils should contain a small number of the most trusted advisers.[32] In this same writing France rejoins: " They have provided for me a great many little secret consultations, putting good Frenchmen out of the council.[33] Another anonymous author about this time urges the young king to hold to the good old councillors, faithful servants of his father, and well versed in state affairs: he has three great enemies about him, in his cabinet.[34] An undated satire, written perhaps, about 1614, declares that when Vulcan wished to consider secret and important affairs for the reformation of the monarchy he took all the demigods whom he had assembled apart into a large cabinet.[35] In 1615 Ponchartrain speaks of the king and his council in the royal cabinet.[36] An account written by Molé speaks of the cabinet of the council and the cabinet of the king.[37]

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[26] "Ne s'y proposant jamais rien dont les ministres ne fussent auparavant convenus avec la Reine, dans les audiences particulieres qu'elle leur donnoit très souvent; de sorte qu'y allant préparés, et les autres non, personne ne pouvoit quasy leur contredire, et ils y faisoient tout ce qu'ils vouloient." Fontenay-Mareuil, *Mémoires,* v. 35.

[27] Ponchartrain, *Mémoires,* in Petitot, *Collection des Mémoires Relatifs à l'Histoire de France,* xvi. 437. "M. le prince [Condé] étant venu au lever de la Reine, et ayant fait entrer les officiers de la couronne et autres principaux du conseil au cabinet de sa Majesté," made a declaration: *ibid.,* p. 440.

[28] Louis Batiffol, *Le Roi Louis XIII à Vignt Ans* (Paris, 1910), p. 147, on the authority of various manuscripts of 1620 and 1623.

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[29] *Mémoires de Monsieur Deageant* (Grenoble, 1668), p. 214.

[30] " Voyant que Sa Majesté desiroit fortifier de quelqu'vn le Conseil Secret ": *ibid.*, p. 301.

[31] " Les oiseaux furent de là en avant nommés *oiseaux du cabinet* ": Fontenay-Mareuil, *Mémoires*, v. 44.

[32] " Et d'autant que le decret est l'ame des Conseils, vous deuez choisir quelque petit nombre de vos plus confidens ": *La France Mourante Dialogve* (no place, no date).

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[34] " Vous auez aupres de vous, au dessus de vous, au vostre Cabinet & par tout où vous allez trois ennemis capitaux ": *La Sybille Françoise Parlant au Roy*, in *Recueil des Pièces les Plus Curieuses Qui ont esté faites pendant le Regne du Connestable M. de Lvyne* (2d ed., 1624), p. 307.

[35] " Il les retire à part en vn grand Cabinet fort bien paré ": *Le Cabinet de Vlcan* [Paris?, 1614?], p. 1.

[36] *Mémoires*, xvii. 72.

In 1617, in the midst of no little discontent, was held an assembly of the notables at Rouen. Those who attended drew up propositions for reform to be submitted to the king. One of them had to do with the council charged with management of the secret affairs of the state, a body known then by various names, among which was *conseil de cabinet.*[38] Ponchartrain says that the articles were drawn up to be submitted to this principal and secret council, which then contained six members.[39] One of the Venetian envoys says that the notables wished to reform what was called " the cabinet council ", in which the most important matters were decided.[40] Of the twenty propositions which they draw up some concerned management of the secret affairs of state and the king's council. The notables proposed that the council of state and finance and the privy council should consist of the princes of the blood, the cardinals and the other princes, the dukes, the peers, and officers of the crown, the secretaries of state, the sur-intendants, commissioners and intendants of the finances. Apparently, as in England in 1679, the plan was to have a council more restricted in size to handle council business, which would make unnecessary the smaller cabinet council.[41]

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[37] " Le jeudi 9 avril, le Parlement se rendit au Louvre sur les quatre heures. Et apres avoir attendu quelques heures au cabinet de Conseil, M. de Lomenye les appela au cabinet de Roi." *Mémoires* de *Mathieu Molé* (Société de l'Histoire de France), i. 24.

[38] Mariéjol in Lavisse, vi, part ii. 197.

[39] " Ceux de son conseil principal et secret, qui étoit lors composé de MM. le chancelier, le garde des sceaux, de Villeroy et président Jeannin, auxquels étoient ajoutés et se trouvoient messieurs Déageant et de Modène ": *Mémoires,* xvii. 252, 253.

[40] Letter of Piero Contarini, 29 December 1617 (N.S.): Venetian Transcripts, x. 43. See also *ibid.,* cxliv. 163.

[41] Molé, i. 164-168.

The designs of the notables were successfully opposed by Louis XIII. In 1617 a writer speaks of a council in the cabinet of books, naming five—all important officials—of those present.[42] Louis continued to govern with this council, referring all matters to them. It was held every morning, and more frequently, if needed. At the Louvre it was assembled in the *cabinet des livres* or in some other room. The king himself attended the meetings.[43] About 1620 a satire against Luynes represented the shade of Henry IV going into his cabinet, where after weeping at the miseries of France, he called his most trusted servants with whom he conferred on the disorders in the kingdom.[44] In 1623 was composed a work, *Les Vrais Styls des Conseils d'Estat et Privé du Roy,* which enumerated among others *conseil secret ou de cabinet.*[45] Two years later a Venetian wrote that various matters, including marriage of the princess with the king of England, were talked of, but were kept very secret in the cabinet.[46]

Richelieu, writing about 1642, declared that it was best for the state that its council should be restricted to four members.[47] In 1656 a writer spoke of the secret or cabinet council, which was also known as *conseil d'en haut.*[48] Apparently the *conseil d'état* was gradually restricted in practice so as to include but a small number. In 1662 there is reference to the *conseil d'état ou de cabinet.*[49] In 1752 an English ambassador wrote that the *conseil d'état* contained nine members.[50]

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[42] Molé, i., p. 146.

[43] Batiffol, p. 147, on the authority of a Venetian ambassador's manuscript account in the Bibliothèque National.

[44] *La Chronique des Fauoris* [1621?], p. 54.

[45] Léon Aucoc, *Le Conseil d'État, avant et depuis 1789* (Paris, 1876). p. 51.

[46] "Passano però queste voci molto secrete, ne escono dai gabinetti": Despatch of Marcantonio Morosini, 12 July 1625 (N. S.): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 2d series, ii. 196.

[47] "Ainsi que la pluralité des Medicins, cause quelquesfois la Mort du Malade, au lieu d'aiser sa Guerison; ainsi l'Etat recevra-t-il plûtôt du Préjudice que de l'Avantage, si les Conseillers sont en grand Nombre; J'ajoüte, qu'il n'en peut avec Fruit avoir plus de quatre." Richelieu, *Testament Politique* (3d ed., Amsterdam, 1688), p. 265.

[48] Aucoc, p. 53, citing *Le Parfait État de la France* (1656).

When in November 1700 news reached France of the death of the king of Spain, a council was held in the afternoon at the lodgings of Madame de Maintenon. She was present together with the chancellor, the duc de Beauvilliers, and Torcy. The dauphin was out hunting, but next morning another council was held in the same manner, he being present.[51] According to Saint-Simon, when news of the Spanish bequest arrived, Louis XIV retired into his cabinet, commanding his ministers to be at the lodgings of Madame de Maintenon—who was always present at the council—at three o'clock that afternoon. Louis came and the council lasted until seven o'clock. Next day there was a council of state at the king's, and that evening another at Madame de Maintenon's.[52]

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[49] Aucoc, p. 54.

[50] The earl of Albemarle to the duke of Newcastle, Paris, 28 May/8 June 1752: Add. MS. 35412, fo. 122.

[51] Earl of Manchester to the earl of Jersey, Paris, 12 November 1700: *Letters of William III. and Louis XIV. and of Their Ministers,* etc. (ed. Paul Grimblot, London, 1848), ii. 460.

[52] " Le lendemain mercredi, il y eut conseil d'État le matin chez le Roi, à l'ordinaire, et au retour de la chasse il en tint un autre, comme la veille, chez M^me^ de Maintenon, depuis six heures du soir jusqu'à près de dix." *Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon* (ed. Chéruel et Regnier, Paris, 1881), ii. 385.

# CHAPTER XI

## FAVORITES AND PARTICULAR ADVISERS

THE origin of small councils within or beside the older, larger bodies, whether in France or in England, may have been to some extent in the very natural desire of the sovereign to rely upon a favorite or confer with a few most trusted advisers, informally and as desired. It is not certain that the three or four select counsellors who assembled in the cabinet of Henry IV or walked with him about his gardens were necessarily a committee or a recognized part of his larger council, though certainly they were members of it. Again and again during the seventeenth century favorite or particular ministers were all-powerful in France. About 1620 an anonymous satirist said everyone knew that all the great ones in the kingdom were discontented at seeing how Luynes and his brothers had monopolized the power of the crown in the past four years.[1] Afterwards the destinies of France were long in the keeping of Richelieu and then of Mazarin. So also in England. Long before the first mention of a cabinet council, and again long after cabinet councils were certainly established, kings had their favorites or conferred informally with such as they chose. Francis Bacon wrote that princes were not bound to communicate all matters to all counsellors; they might select. Affairs requiring extreme secrecy should not go beyond one or two and the king. From such an arrangement came not only secrecy but constant counsels. And he said that Henry VII in principal business imparted himself only to Morton and to Fox.[2]

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[1] *La Chronique des Fauoris,* pp. 2, 3.

[2] Bacon, *Essays,* "Of Counsel."

The parliament roll of 28 Henry III contains a complaint against the duke of Suffolk as "being next and privatest of Counsel to the King", and 11 Richard I thus impugns the bishop of Ely.[3] In 1516 a Venetian ambassador wrote that the recent success of the French might cause a change in English policy, but what would be done was known only to the king and four councillors, who dealt with all the most secret matters.[4] In 1524 certain foreign affairs were dealt with by the king and Wolsey, then by other councillors.[5] In 1540 Henry VIII directed his ambassador in France to communicate information about preliminary negotiations only to Cromwell and to himself.[6] In 1563 Elizabeth wrote with respect to her troops in Normandy that she would not have either friends or enemies know she intended to diminish the number: "And therefor we have herin delt but with a certen nombre of our pryncipall and trustyest counsellors; intendyng, that this our determination shuld not be knowen abrode."[7] On another occasion she wrote about a communication: "We have therin conferred with certayn of our counsayle."[8]

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[3] *Lords' Journals,* iii. 616, 618.

[4] "Quattro conseglieri tra chi . . . ogni cosa secret$^{ma}$." Despatch of Sebastian Giustinian, 26 April 1516: Bibliotheca Nazionale di San Marco, Venice, Dispacci Inghilterra, 1515-1519.

[5] "All whiche mattiers by the Kinges Highnes and me furst aparte, and after with the moste sad and discreate Lordes of his most honnorable Councell, substancially digested, and profoundly debated" . . . Wolsey to Richard Pace, 31 August 1524: *State Papers, Henry VIII,* vi. 334.

[6] "Forasmoche as thise matiers doo yet consist in the nature of practise and overtures, We have not opened the hole of the same to all our Counsail, and therefor woll that you shall either directe your answer to Ourself, or to our right trusty and welbiloved counsailour the Lord Privy Seale; not participating the same to any others, tyl youe shal knowe further of our pleasure." Henry VIII to Sir John Wallop, 5 April 1540: *ibid.,* viii. 298.

[7] Letter to the earl of Warwick, 6 February 1562-3: Patrick Forbes, *A Full View of the Public Transactions in the Reign of Q. Elizabeth* (London, 1741), ii. 326.

[8] Letter to the earl of Warwick, March 1563: *ibid.,* ii. 362.

In 1603 Sully wrote to Henry IV that Cecil was the chief of the council.[9] A year later the French ambassador reported that James was entirely governed by the advice of Cecil.[10] The domestic state papers of the earlier years of James I contain abundant evidence of his activity and power.[11] A memorial written just after the Gunpowder Plot and corrected by Salisbury himself asserted that he had for some time past "acquainted the K. and some of his Ma$^{ts}$ inward Councellors" with the machinations of the Catholics.[12] In 1609 the French ambassador spoke of the most trusted councillors of the king.[13] Next year he designated as "ephors" the lord treasurer, the earl of Northampton—lord privy seal, the duke of Lenox, the lord admiral, the master of the horse, the lord Chamberlain, and Lord Knolles—treasurer of the household.[14]

To a considerable extent James I ruled apart from his privy council, often following his own ideas rather than advice of the council. He loved to be away from London, and at Greenwich, or even more at one of his beloved country residences—Theobalds or Royston, he gave directions not after meeting privy council but by correspondence through his secretary with the proper officials.[15]

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[9] "Le sieur Cecile, chef du conseil des affaires": Sully, *Mémoires,* iv. 300.

[10] M. de Beaumont to Villeroy, 3 August 1604 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, xxxviii. 216.

[11] S. P. D., James I, i-xxxvii.

[12] *Ibid.,* ccxvi, part ii. 129.

[13] "Le Roy de la Grande Bretagne fait encor un nouveau livre . . . contre l'advis de ses plus confidents conseillers." M. de la Broderie to M. de Puysieux, London, 27 January 1609 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, xli.

[14] "Aud. Conseil estoit le Grand Tresorier, le comte de Northampton, le duc de Lenox, l'amiral, le Grand Escuyer, le Grand Chamberlan et le baron Quenoles, qui, pour vous dire, sont les efores." Letter of 14 February 1610 (N.S.): *ibid.*

[15] For example, S. P. D., James I, lviii, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 November, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13 December 1610.

Sometimes he would not see the most important ministers; at others he was reluctant to meet the privy council even when the council desired it. In 1610, when Salisbury proposed, apparently, a meeting of the king with the council, Secretary Lake replied that his majesty was unwilling to attend such a meeting unless for important business.[16] James was then at Royston. The lord chamberlain had a house not far distant: the king was willing to see him and the lord privy seal, "who hauing their information from your ll. of that which you wold impart may both deliuer it to his ma$^{ty}$ at large and return to your lo. in ample manner his annsweares".[17] Next year the French ambassador reported that James had left for Theobalds, with him the prince, the lord treasurer, and only three or four others of the council.[18] About this time the ambassador of Savoy had audience with James. He was received in the gallery alone; but when he wished to display the document accrediting him, the king caused the principal members of his council, in a room nearby, to be called. After the reading he said that he would advise with his council and answer in a few days.[19] That year a Venetian reported that the king conferred often apart with three or four Scots about important affairs: sometimes he thus made decision before consulting others.[20] At this time four of the twenty members of the privy council were Scots. Another contemporary declares that the affairs of Scotland were managed by several Scots lords under the king: they had been arranged solely by Dunbar while he lived.[21] In 1613 the Spanish ambassador was reported to have said that Viscount Rochester—acting secretary of state—was modest enough at the council, not seeming to press or sway anything: "But afterward the King resoluethe all businesses w$^{th}$ him alone. Both those w$^{ch}$ passe by Councell, & many others, wherew$^{th}$ hee neuer makethe them acquainted".[22] Shortly after the French ambassador was reporting that James was constantly strengthened in a certain policy by the archbishop of Canterbury and others of his principal ministers, who were near his majesty and had the principal part in his affairs.[23]

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[16] S. P. D., James I, lviii, 26 November 1610.

[17] *Ibid.,* 27 November 1610.

[18] "Le dit Roy . . . laissa de partir . . . pour aller a Tribolz, l'une de ses maisons distante de XIII mils d'icy où il demeura le mardy, et avec luy estoient le prince son filz, le sieur grand tresorier, et trois ou quatre de son Conseil seulement." De Buisseaux to Villeroy, 29 November 1611 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, xliii. 175.

[19] "Le dit Roy first appeller les principaux de son Conseil qui estoient en une chambre proche . . . le dit Roy first responce qu'il adviseroit avec son Conseil" . . . *Ibid.*

[20] "Ma al presente pare che Sua Maestà conferisca, e consiglia spesso a parte con tre o quattro Scozzesi suoi intimi i più importanti negozii, ed alcuna volta prima risolve, che communicarli con altrui, cosa che è malissimo intesa dagli Inglesi." Relazione di Marcantonio Correr (1611): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 4th series, i. 121.

In 1614 Gondomar wrote to a Spanish official that much business passed with the king and only the earl of Somerset—to which title Rochester, who also became lord chamberlain, had risen.[24] Almost at the same time he told another that the English government was in the hands of three principal ministers.[25] Next year Gondomar quotes James I as referring to those of his council and those of his chamber.[26]

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[21] S. P. D., James I, lxii, 27 March 1611.

[22] S. P. Foreign, Spain, xx, 22 September 1613.

[23] De Buisseaux to de Puysieux, London, 11 October 1613 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, xlvii. 175.

[24] "Podia haver passado esta platica y la noticia della entre el Rey a solas y el Conde de Somerset su privado como pasan otras muchas." Don Diego Sarmiento to the Archduke Albert, London, 8 June 1614 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, vi. 87.

[25] "El Almirante y el Conde de Nortanton y el de Sufole que son los que gouiernan la maquina de aqui." Letter to the captain general of Milan, 12 June 1614 (N. S.): *ibid.*, v. 138.

[26] "Los de su Consejo y los de su camara." Letter to the king of Spain, 22 January 1615 (N. S.): *ibid.*, viii.

Doubtless need for secrecy and quick decision often confined business to the cognizance of a small number of the council. In 1617 one of the secretaries of state wrote with respect to alleged information about a plot, that he had not communicated letters relating to it to " the body of the cownsayl " lest the matter be divulged, " yet I purpose to acquaynt my Lord of Canterbury my Lord Keeper with the letters, and my Lord Treasurier at his returne ".[27] A week later he proposed to include the lord privy seal.[28] That summer Gondomar wrote that while in the absence of James from London the council governed, four of the councillors had particular power.[29] The French ambassadors many times mentioned the principal councillors of the king.

In 1618 the Venetian ambassador wrote that the king of England had a special favorite above all others.[30] Early the next year the Spanish representative declared that one man—Buckingham—had been able to effect the dissolution of parliament, against almost all the other councillors, and even against the will of the king.[31] About the same time John Chamberlain wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton that the duke of Buckingham seemed to engross the prince's favor so far as to exclude all others both from him and from his father.[32] Later he reported that when the French ambassadors treated about the marriage, "they had audience . . . both publike and priuate, the articles were agreed and signed the K. Pr. D. of Buckingam and Secretarie Conway only present, the rest of the counsaile (though almost all the great Lords were there) not so much as called or inquired after".[33] James had continued to spend much of his time away from Whitehall—at Royston, Theobalds, Newmarket, and other places. Sometimes he had some of the privy councillors with him, usually a secretary of state.

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[27] Sir Ralph Winwood the earl of Buckingham, 5 June 1617: *H.M.C.*, 10th report, i. 100.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[29] " Y aunque en ausencia deste Rey gouiernan los del Consejo tienen especial y particular comision sobre todos y sobre todo el que llaman Arçobispo de Cantarueri el Chanciller (que es muy honrada persona) y el Conde de Sufold y el de Uster." Letter to the king of Spain, London, 12 July 1617 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, xvii.

[30] Account of Antonio Foscarini, 19 December 1618 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, ix. 153.

[31] "Pues está ya resuelto el Parlamento . . . Todo esto puede vn ombre solo contra casi todos los demas consejeros y, lo que causa mas admiracion, contra la voluntad de su mismo Rey que le leuantó del poluo de la tierra." Don Carlos Colonna to the king of Spain, London, 9 January 1624 (N. S.): Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, xxxi.

At the beginning of the reign of Charles I one of Carleton's correspondents wrote that the noble duke was "hugely high" in the royal favor, that Lord Conway—secretary of state—was the chief instrument in despatch of business: that after the duke the king heard no councillors so gladly as the lord treasurer and the lord chamberlain.[34] The Tuscan resident at the court wrote back that Buckingham, Pembroke, and the two secretaries were his majesty's select confidants, who were to settle the most important affairs of state with the king, which seriously mortified other members of the privy council.[35] "The .D. of Buckingam was neuer in greater fauor and all thinges passe by him", wrote Chamberlain.[36] To Buckingham himself a certain one wrote: [37]

> They say the best lords of the Councell, knew nothinge of Count Mansfelt jurney or this fleete; w$^{ch}$ discontents euen the best sort, if not all; they say it is a very

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[32] Letter of 31 January 1623-4: S. P. D., James I, clviii.

[33] Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 18 December 1624: *ibid.*, clxxvi.

[34] Sir Tobie Matthew to Sir Dudley Carleton, London, 27 April 1625: S. P. D., Charles I, i.

[35] Despatch of Amerigo Salvetti to the grand duke of Tuscany, London, 2 May 1625: *H. M. C.*, 11th report, i. 10.

[36] Letter to Carleton, 6 May 1625: S. P. D., Charles I, ii.

[37] Thomas Lord Cromwell to Buckingham, 8 September 1625: *ibid.*, vi.

> great burden yo$^{r}$ grace tackes upon you; since non knows any thinge but you; it is conceued, y$^{t}$ not letinge others bere part of the burden now you bere, it may ruin you . . . nothinge is more wondered at, then th$^{t}$ one graue man is not knowne to haue yo$^{r}$ ere: except my good and noble lord Conway . . .

So for a time it continued.[38] During a debate in the commons Sir Francis Seymour said: "Since Princes must see and heare with other eyes and eares, how happy is that Kinge who reposeth his counsel upon men of worthiness and how unhappy hee who resteth upon on or two, and they such as knowe better how to flatter and to begg of him then how to give him good counsell?"[39] In 1626 the Venetian, Contarini, said that the kingdom was divided into two: the king, Buckingham, and a few others in royal favor and all the rest of the country.[40] This he wrote just after arriving in England. A little later he declared that Buckingham alone, perhaps more than the king, sustained the burdensome management of the country's foreign and domestic affairs.[41] The mass of the remaining state papers show how largely the lord admiral engrossed the business of government. During 1626 and 1627 many more of them concern him than the secretaries of state, whose papers generally predominate so largely. Buckingham had his own secretary, Edward Nicholas, who among other things prepared minutes of business to be submitted by Buckingham to the privy council. In 1627 Contarini speaking to Carleton about a matter found him utterly ignorant of it, though a member of the council, and one of the most confidential counsellors of the king and of the duke.[42] A little later, after the failure at Ré, Nicholas wrote to the great man that all things were at a stand, " till yo$^r$ p$^r$sence shall give light & direc̄c̄ons to it.".[43] An undated French report declared that most business was settled between the king and the duke alone.[44]

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[38] "La Cour ne change que de demeure, la faveur et les affaires sont tousiours en mesme main": the bishop of Mande to M. d'Herbault, London, 26 July 1626 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, lxvi. 118.

[39] *Debates in the House of Commons in 1625* (Camden Society, new series, vi), p. 78.

[40] Letter of Alvise Contarini, 21 August 1626 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xiii. 8.

[41] Letter of 4 September 1626 (N. S.): *ibid.*, xiii. 29.

After Buckingham's death there was speculation at first whether Charles would manage his business himself, rely upon one or two particular men, or else leave things wholly to his council: " which if he doth many had need to be turn$^d$ out, because they will haue noe use of Ciphers." But " now the King is resolued to imploy himselfe most, and by that, to satisfie the people that the Duke was but his Instrument ".[45] Charles never again gave himself entirely to a single favorite. Clarendon, writing a generation later of this time, says that after Buckingham's death the lord treasurer, Sir Richard Weston, greatly wished to be " the sole favourite ", but that Charles was now resolved to hold the reins in his own hands.[46] To some extent, none the less, the king continued to have his principal or favorite ministers: first the lord treasurer—Weston, and afterwards Laud—archbishop of Canterbury. In 1628 the Tuscan envoy asserted that the privy council was managing everything, and that of this council the lord treasurer, the earl of Pembroke, and another had the ear of the king in all matters of importance.[47] In 1635 the Venetian ambassador mentioned six of the privy council to whom Charles gave principal consideration, of whom the lord treasurer—become earl of Portland, was one.[48] Two years later another Venetian declared that the king was taking only the counsel of the archbishop of Canterbury with respect to religious matters in Scotland.[49] In 1638 a correspondent averred that the archbishop was highest in favor.[50] A year later it was said that Charles trusted his greatest secrets only to Laud, the earl of Northumberland—lord admiral, Viscount Wentworth—the lord deputy, and the marquis of Hamilton—master of the horse.[51]

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[42] Letter of 10 July 1627 (N.S.): *ibid.*, xiv. 485, 486.

[43] Letter to Buckingham, 14 November 1627: S.P.D., Charles I, lxxxiv.

[44] " Il fault remarquer que la plus grande partie des affaires se résoult entre le Roy et le Duc seulement: qu'en d'aulcunes, le Duc y appelle toutes ses créatures, pour les rendre plus authentiques." " Affaires d'Angleterre," Transcripts from Paris, lxvi. 234.

[45] Lord Henry Percy to the earl of Carlisle, 3 September 1628: S.P.D., Charles I, dxxix, 15.

[46] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion,* i. 62.

So it was with Charles II, after the restoration: first he had Clarendon in highest confidence and esteem; then others later on. In 1662, at a meeting of the privy council, apparently, Charles passed over a note to Clarendon: there was to be a secret discussion of French business at the lord chancellor's house; ought not Lord St. Albans to be present? Answer was passed back: [52]

> Sure m^y^ L^d^ S^t^ Albans should not be ther, for wee must speake of those thinges to which he is a stranger, I thinke no body but you and your brother should be ther, excepte you bringe my L^d^ L^t^ and indeede I should say somethinges to you alone, when you thinke fitt.

Burnet afterwards wrote that following the Restoration Charles was influenced about the disposal of most of the offices and places by " the cabal " that met at Mistress Palmer's lodgings. That though the earl of Clarendon often prevailed on the king to alter the resolutions taken there, yet he was forced to let pass much that he did not like.[53] In 1663 Pepys, speaking of the privy councillors, said that the favorites then were Lord Bristol, the duke of Buckingham—gentleman of the bedchamber, Sir Henry Bennet—secretary of state, Lord Ashley—chancellor of the exchequer, and Sir Charles Berkeley—later Viscount Fitzharding, treasurer of the household, " who, among them, have cast my Lord Chancellor upon his back, past ever getting up again ".[54] In February 1664 Pepys spent an hour with Master Alsopp, the king's brewer, bewailing the present posture of things: " the King led away by half-a-dozen men, that one of his serious servants and friends can come at him. These are Lauderdale [secretary of state in Scotland], Buckingham, Hamilton, Fitzharding (to whom he hath, it seems, given £12,000 per annum in the best part of the King's estate) ; and that the old Duke of Buckingham could never get of the King. Progers is another, and Sir H. Bennett ".[55] In 1667 one at Whitehall told Pepys that Buckingham and Bristol were now the only " Cabinet Council " of Charles, even the duke of York—lord high admiral—being excluded.[56] Shortly after he says Sir George Carteret related " that the Duke of Buckingham do rule all now, and the Duke of York comes indeed to the Caball, but signifies little there. That this new faction do not endure, nor the King, Sir W. Coventry; but yet that he is so usefull that they cannot be without him; but that he is not now called to the Caball ".[57] In 1670 Sir William Temple wrote: " I have seen my Lord Keeper and Mr. Secretary Trevor . . . I find them both but barely in the skirts of business; and only in right of their posts: and that in the secret of it, the Duke of Buckingham [master of the horse], my Lord Arlington [secretary of state], my Lord Ashly [chancellor of the exchequer], and Sir Thomas Clifford [comptroller of the household], at present compose the Ministry ".[58] It was afterwards asserted that the scheme for a secret treaty with France to extend the Roman Catholic faith was planned by the duke of York, Lord Clifford, Lord Arundel of Wardour, and the earl of Arlington, who then laid their scheme before Charles.[59] In the memoirs of James II it is said that while the king's " Cabinet Councill " consisted of Buckingham, Lauderdale, Arlington, Clifford, and Ashley Cooper, " none of them but Lord Arlington and Clifford had knowledge of the Secret Treaty with France ".[60] In 1673, when the duke of York was forced to resign his offices because of the passage of the Test Act, the Venetian ambassador reported that while he did not now take his seat at the council board, yet the junta and the cabinet were open to him.[61] In 1676, when there was project of a treaty with the French king to obtain more money, Charles assembled the duke of York, Lauderdale, and the earl of Danby—lord treasurer, to confer with them about it. The lord treasurer told Lauderdale that their heads would be in peril if they signed such a treaty alone. When Charles heard this, says the French ambassador, he caused them to come into his cabinet with the duke of York. It being proposed to admit into this council the lord chancellor and all the other ministers, Charles told them that he desired nothing more passionately than a good alliance with France; that the matter would be made public if brought before the council; that not the least knowledge was to go forth; so he intended to sign the treaty with his own hand.[62] In 1678 the chaplain and tutor to the princesses Mary and Anne wrote that the commons were very angry, and talked high against the "king's caball": one speaker declaring that the privy council signified little but to examine the conduct of some non-conformist minister or something about a justice of the peace; "but if any matter of importance or state business was to be canvass'd, but three or four persons, and they not the best statesmen, were allow'd to concern themselves with it".[63] It may, of course, be that here the speaker, debating as an outsider, was merely referring to meetings of the committee of foreign affairs, of which some were small.

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[47] Despatch of Amerigo Salvetti, 20 October 1628: *H.M.C.*, 11th report, i. 165.

[48] Relazione di Vincenzo Gussoni (1635): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei*, 4th series, i. 311.

[49] "L'arcivescovo di Canterbury (col solo Consiglio del quale in questo interesse la maesta sua regi le proprie risolutioni)" . . . Letter of Angelo Correr, 25 November 1637 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xviii. 236.

[50] Letter from D. D. to his cousin, John Hastings, London, 1 September 1638: S. P. D., Charles I, cccci. 19i.

[51] The countess of Carlisle to the countess of Leicester, 19 December 1639: *Sydney Papers*, ii. 626.

[52] *Notes Passed at Privy Council*, p. 79.

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[53] Burnet, *History of My Own Time* (ed. by Osmund Airy, Oxford, 1897-1900), i. 287.

[54] Pepys, *Diary*, 15 May 1663.

[55] *Diary*, 22 February 1663-4.

[56] *Ibid.*, 16 November 1667.

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[57] *Ibid.*, 30 December 1667.

[58] Sir William Temple to Sir John Temple, London, 22 November 1670 (N. S.): Temple, *Works* (London, 1814), ii. 174, 175.

[59] Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland,* i. 29, 30.

[60] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* i. 454.

[61] " E la Giunta et il Gabinetto ": Despatch of Girolamo Alberti, 14 July 1673 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliii. 547.

From time to time little groups of the most important councillors conferred apart, though often this may have had no more significance than would arise from convenience of so doing particular business.[64] In 1678 Secretary Coventry wrote to Secretary Williamson: "His Majesty after Councell, assembled my Lord Treasurer the Earl of Essex [who at the moment held no great office] and my self in the red Room and there took an

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[62] Ruvigny to Louis XIV, 27 February 1676: Dalrymple, ii, part i. 102, 103.

[63] *The Camden Miscellany* (I): *Diary of Edward Lake* (Camden Society, xxxix), pp. 27, 28.

[64] "After Councell (w$^{ch}$ was ended yesterday before eleven), my L$^{d}$ Keeper, the D. of Bucks, & my L$^{d}$ Arlington were in private in the Councell chamber till nere two." Letter of R. Francis to Sir Joseph Williamson, 22 August 1668: S. P. D., Charles II, ccxlv.

Account from me of what had passed betwixt the forraign Ministers and me in the late Conference".[65] For mere continuation confidentially of council business or else secret transaction of departmental business some of these meetings were held, but others were forerunners, doubtless, of what later on were called "private meetings" of ministers. After the reform of the privy council in 1679 real power was soon transferred from the committee of intelligence—an inner group composed of from nine to thirteen members—to four who met privately or apart: Temple, Sunderland—secretary of state, Essex—first lord of the treasury, and Halifax—who held no great office. Immediately after the reform the French ambassador wrote that the duchess of Portsmouth had large part of the confidence of the king; that the councillors who had his trust were Sunderland, Essex, and Temple.[66] A few months later the Dutch ambassador referred to those who were of his majesty's most secret council and possessed his confidence.[67] It is said that Charles communicated his design of recalling his brother from Brussels to Essex, Halifax, Sunderland, Hyde—chancellor of the exchequer, and Godolphin—a commissioner of the treasury, "who had been consulted with all along in those matters".[68] In the following March Barillon wrote to Louis XIV that the duke of York had drawn to the duchess of Portsmouth; that she was in close understanding with Sunderland; that the duke of York had come to an understanding with Hyde and Godolphin; that Godolphin, though he was scarcely yet a minister, was in the secret affairs and greatly in the confidence of the king.[69] In 1681 the ambassador reported a conversation with the duchess of Portsmouth: that he understood Charles and herself to be of the same opinion; that there were secrets of court and cabinet which outsiders could not penetrate.[70] When parliament was suddenly dissolved in March Luttrell heard that the plan was known but to four persons, Arlington—lord chamberlain, Seymour—who held no great office, Hyde—first lord of the treasury, and Sir Thomas Littleton.[71] In the summer Charles agreed after much haggling to allow the French to seize Luxemburg, receiving a million livres in return: the bargain was known to none of his counsellors except Lord Hyde.[72] In November a correspondent referred to " the Lords of the Secret Junto . . . I know not what other name to give them ".[73] About the same time Barillon wrote of the most secret council which the king of England had with Halifax, Seymour, and Hyde.[74] A little later he wrote that the king of England found it embarrassing that Halifax and Seymour were not in the secret of the subsidies coming from France.[75] In 1682 a secretary of state wrote to the lord chancellor and the lord president that the king wished to speak with them " about some business of importance " after the meeting of the committee of foreign affairs was over.[76]

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[65] Letter of 27 March 1678: Add. MS. 25124, fo. 138.

[66] Barillon to the king of France, London, 8 May 1679 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxlii. 233.

[67] "Diegeene die van des Konings secreetsten Raat sijn ende Syne Majesteits confidentie hebben." Van Leeuwen to the states general, Westminster, 26 December 1679 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 EE, fo. 288.

[68] *Memoirs of James II*, in Clarke, *Life of James the Second*, i. 572.

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[69] Letter of 18 March 1680 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxliv. 102.

[70] " Je respondit que j'avoit peine a croire que le Roy d'Angleterre et elle ne fussent pas de mesme advis; que c'estoient des secrets de cour et de cabinet que les estrangers ne pouvoient penetrer." Letter to the king of France, 27 January 1681 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cxlviii. 28.

[71] Luttrell, i. 72.

[72] Dalrymple, ii, part ii. 21, 22.

[73] Earl of Arran to the duke of Ormonde, London, 19 November 1681: *H. M. C., Ormonde MSS.*, new series, vi. 233.

[74] Hyde endeavored to persuade the ambassador that he was doing what he could to have Charles act in a manner convenient to Louis, but that he could not carry it alone: " que quand on parloit de cette affaire dans le conseil le plus secret que sa Majesté Britannique tient avec Milord Halifax, Mr Seymer, et luy, il ne pouvoit soustenir son advis et destruire les raisons des autres parce qu'il faudroit leur confier ce qu'il n'est pas a propos de leur dire." Barillon to the king of France, London, 20 November 1681 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, cl. 327.

About the end of the reign of Charles, according to Roger North, interior councils, " more retired cabals ", or " wheels within wheels ", took the place of the ministry or the cabinet.[77] Certainly for a time small groups of favorites or interior councils, beside or above the most important of the committees of the privy council had the ear of the king, as had been the case in those earliest years of the reign of James I before men talked of the cabinet council. Halifax afterwards writing of the king and the duchess of Portsmouth, said that " her chamber was the true Cabinet Council ".[78]

Immediately after the death of Charles II the French ambassador said that the cabinet was only being held for the sake of form, and that the king had secret conferences with Sunderland—secretary of state, Rochester—lord treasurer, and Godolphin—lord chamberlain to the queen, to decide the most important matters, Rochester having greatest weight.[79]

The Catholic inclinations of James II soon led to what was practically a small Catholic council, nearer to the king and more in the secret of his plans than any other body at the time. In March 1685 Barillon wrote that there was a kind of a council made of four from among the Catholics: Arundel, Bellasis, Talbot, and Germain.[80] To this group Sunderland and others were presently admitted. In 1686 the French ambassador described it as a council independent of all the others, one in which the most important resolutions were taken, namely, those concerning the Catholics. The papal nuncio, who was also consulted, knew of the determinations of this group.[81] Somewhat later the earl of Clarendon wrote to the earl of Rochester asking what seemed to be the king's inclination towards himself when affairs were discussed, "if they are ever spoken of before you: perhaps they are only laid before the private junto, and the four new Privy Counsellors".[82]

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[75] Letter of 4 December 1681 (N. S.): *ibid.*, fo. 351.

[76] S. P. D. E. B., lxviii. 25 February 1681-2.

[77] *Lives of the Norths*, i. 306.

[78] " A Character of King Charles II," Foxcroft, *Life of Halifax*, ii. 350.

[79] " Il n'y a eu encore aucun changement dans les Charges; le Roy d'Angleterre a crû d'abord devoir laisser les choses comme elles sont. On n'a mesmes encore rien changé au Conseil du Cabinet, mais il ne se tient que pour la forme, et le Roy d'Angleterre a des Conférences secrettes avec Mylord Sunderland, Mylord Rochester et Mylord Godolphin, où les choses les plus importantes se résolvent. Mylord Rochester a plus de part qu'aucun autre à sa Confiance." Cipher letter of Barillon to the king of France, London, 19 February 1685 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, clx. 43, 44. He repeated this in a letter written a few days later—22 February 1685 (N. S.): *ibid.*, fo. 55.

From the papers of James II it would seem that about this time Sunderland persuaded the king to appoint some of the most considerable Catholics to meet at times either at his office or at that of Chiffinch—keeper of the king's closet, to consult about matters relating to religion. Professing himself to be a Catholic, he was not only admitted, but soon had the chief direction "of this Secret juncto; it was a sort of Committee from the Cabinet Council itself, whither by degrees he drew all business".[83] This group, which was to concert all measures taken with respect to the Roman Catholics, consisted, besides James II himself, of Sunderland, Father Petre—even before he became a member of the privy council, and the Lords Bellasis, Powis, Arundel, and Dover. Under pretence that all public affairs were so much connected with those of religion that the two could not be separated, Sunderland contrived to have most of the interests of state likewise committed to this private council. Then under pretence that a group of seven was too numerous, he prevailed on James to limit it to three—the king, Petre, and himself; and order was given to the ambassadors abroad that all intelligence of consequence should be communicated to the members of this small group only. All of which gave Sunderland himself great power.[84]

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[80] Letter to Louis XIV, London, 5 March 1685 (N.S.): *ibid.*, fo. 73.

[81] "Le Comte de Tuez a esté joint aux autres Seigneurs Catholiques que le Roy d'Angletre consulte et qui s'assemblent souvent avec Milord Sonderland pour délibérer sur les affaires qui se présentent. C'est une espèce de Conseil indépendant de tout autre et dans lequel les résolutions les plus importantes se prennent, c'est à dire celles qui regardent la Religion.—Mr d'Adda est consulté à part et a Connoissance de ce qui se détermine." Letter to the king of France, London, 25 March 1686 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxv. 286.

[82] Letter of 27 July 1686: *Correspondence of Henry Hyde*, i. 510.

[83] Clarke, *Life of James the Second*, ii. 74.

In 1702 Thomas Sheridan, the Jacobite, composed an account of these matters based on contemporary papers which he had written. He says that Sunderland, after he had been dismissed, strove to come again into power. Accordingly, he made an arrangement with Mr. Jermin and Col. Talbot, in pursuance whereof he " got his new friends promoted, one was made Viscount Dover in England, the other Earl of Tyrconnell in Ireland, and having given them this earnest of his friendship, drew into his party, by their assistance, all the Catholic lords of consideration, and prevailed with the King to erect them together with himself into a particular Cabinet Council, to meet once a week or oftener, into which he got Father Peters also admitted ". The narrator says: " The ordinary time of their meeting was Friday in the evening, on which day at dinner they were all treated by Lord Sunderland without the intermixture of any other company. Which ended, they conferred notes, and agreed what was to be proposed and debated before his Majesty; among which one of the first things resolved, was the discarding Mrs. Sydly, the King's mistress ". He declares that " These proceedings of Sunderland and his new cabinet very much surprised the Lord Treasurer, who still, however, carried it outwardly fair to him, without shewing his inward discontent and resentment, but yet to countermine and remove him from court he advised the King to give him the Government of Ireland ".[85]

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[84] Dalrymple, i. part i. 151, 152, 163, 164.

In 1687 a French emissary was instructed to ascertain who were the present members of the secret council or junto.[86] Barillon asserted that Lord Castlemaine had been admitted to the privy council and was also going to " the secret council which is held with the principal Catholics ".[87] Van Citters, the Dutch ambassador, wrote that " the Popish cabinet " was said to have met to consider further regulation of the government of boroughs.[88] About the same time another French report averred that in the privy council were declared only the resolutions already taken in the cabinet council or in another more private council of the king of England.[89] A little later still Barillon wrote that Sunderland, Petre, and Butler regulated all matters, rendering exact account to the king, and that the other councillors had no part in the decisions that were made, save in so far as seemed proper to this "committee".[90] Yet another French report on England related that James often conferred with Father Petre alone in his apartment, often with Sunderland, many times with the two of them there together.[91] It was afterwards said that Sunderland rid himself of being thwarted through other ministers "by hooking all business into that Secret Committee at Mr Chivens's; so that not only the Privy Council was unacquainted with all transactions, till it was resolued they should be made publick, but the Cabinet Council itself was as much a stranger to them as the other, few matters of moment being treated of there, but the reading forreign letters".[92] Burnet believed that Father Petre was the first minister of state at this time, but that Sunderland was very important also.[93]

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[85] " An Historical Account of some remarkable matters concerning King James the Second's succession ", etc., *H. M. C., Stuart Papers,* vi. 3, 4.

[86] " Qui sont ceux qui entrent présentment dans le Conseil Secret ou Jonte, leur penchant ou aversion, à la Religion Catholique, leur attachement secret ou opposition au Prince d'Orange." Mémoire sent to the Marquis de Torcy, 12 September, 1687 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, xlviii.

[87] Letter to the king of France, Windsor, 6 October 1687 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxxiii. 295.

[88] " Gisteren voor de middagh was het Paepse cabinet conseil vergadert om soo veele gelooven, te projecteren en verder te reguleren de orders en commissie tot het doen van gelycke veranderinge omtrent de magistraet en gildens van andere steden int rijck, als nu binnen London geschiet is, immers sulck niet sunde staet het in seer weynigh dagen gedaen te werden." Despatch to the states general, Westminster, 24 October 1687 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 199.

[89] " On y déclare ordinairement les résolutions qui ont este prise, dans le Conseil du Cabinet ou dans un autre Conseil plus particulier que Sa Majesté Britannique tient avec quelques uns de ses plus affidés ministres." [Barillon?] to Seignelay, London, 27 October 1687 (N. S): Transcripts from Paris, clxxiii. 64.

Just before the invitation to William, that led to the Revolution of 1688, it would seem that there was some idea of uniting the Catholic group with another interior group of Protestant councillors upon whom James relied—which might, perhaps, in effect, have restored to first position the cabinet council that seems to have been eclipsed during these years. The papal nuncio, Adda, says that Sunderland told him there was to be a change in the "council of the cabinet" so as to form a single council from the two separate ones then existing, to contain Catholics and Protestants both. Apparently those who would make this change planned also greater centralization of government, since the resultant council would manage all the matters of the three kingdoms, whereas previously Scots and Irish affairs had been dealt with apart. According to Adda's information, however, the king would always consult only a few councillors when he dealt with the most important foreign affairs which required secrecy and must not be communicated to many—maintaining thus, it may be, some distinction between cabinet council and committee of foreign affairs, as Roger North mentioned in another connection.[94] A little before this the French ambassador had reported a "secret council" for an answer to the memorial from the Dutch.[95] In the last days before William arrived in London James is reported to have held in his bedchamber what was either a cabinet council or the small group of his intimates for dispatch of circular letters to the Catholics.[96]

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[90] "Milord Sonderland, le Père Piters et le Sieur Butler s'assemblent souvent et réglent toutes les affaires qui surviennent. Ils rendent compte en particulier au Roy d'Angletre, et les autres n'ont de part aux résolutions qui se prennent qu'autant qu'on le juge à propos dans ce Comité. Cela paroist une grande augmentation de Crédit pour Milord Sonderland, de qui les deux autres sont en quelque façon dépendans et ne sont pas informez des affaires au point qu'il est." Barillon to the king of France, London, 18 December 1687 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, xlviii.

[91] *Ibid.*, clxxiv, 136.

[92] Clarke, *Life of James the Second*, ii. 99.

[93] Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, iii. 210.

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[94] "Milord Sunderland mi ha communicato confidamente un pensiero che tiene S. M. di far qualche mutatione nel consiglio del Gabinetto, anzi di due consigli particolari separati, che hora vi sono, formar ne uno solo, nel qual' entrino li Cattolici Consiglieri, e Protestanti per levare le Gelosie fra li ministri, e che debbano concorrere senza diffidenza al maggior Ben publico, ed al servizio della S. M. con un profittevol incentivo alli stessi Protestanti, li quali per la stessa ragione vorranno distinguersi nel secondare li giusti disegni della M. S. Nel questo consiglio si dovranno agitare tutte le occorrenze delli tre Regni, perche le deliberationi siano piu uniformi, e con l'armonia necessaria al Buon Ordine mentre essendosi in tal qual modo governate sin hora à Parte le materie concernenti la Scotia, e l'Irlanda, si è riconosciuto il vantaggio che rissultara dall' essere trattate e discusse nel medº consiglio dal qual' non di meno S. M. si servira sempre di alcuni pochi per conferire li negotij piu importanti, e massimi forasteri che richiedono più risserva, e non si estenda la communicatione in molti." Despatch of Adda to Rome, 23 April 1688 (N. S.): Add. MS. 34502, fos. 24, 25; also Add. MS. 15397, fos. 25, 26.

[95] Barillon to Louis XIV, London, 29 March 1688: Transcripts from Paris, clxxvi. 421.

Under William also there was much tendency to confide in particular favorites or ministers only, while there were also many small gatherings of particular ministers, outside or within the cabinet council, forerunners of the later private meetings of ministers and of the so-called inner cabinets. In 1693 Luttrell declares that the king had just dined privately at the earl of Bedford's, where were present the dukes of Ormonde and Somerset, the earls of Devonshire, Sunderland, and Portland, Lord Godolphin, and others.[97] This may, of course, have had nothing to do with policy or administration.

In 1694 the duke of Shrewsbury, secretary of state, wrote to the king:

> By her majesty's directions, I suppose, Mr. Secretary Trenchard, upon Wednesday last, writ letters to my lord keeper, lord Portland, privy seal, Lord Sydney, and myself, to meet at his office to consult about the two services that are now expected from the fleet, viz. that of the Mediterranean and the attempt upon Brest. This being at Mr. Secretary's office, where many people came in upon business, could not be such a secret, but the marquis of Normanby hearing of it, came to me yesterday morning, and so positively assured me, that your majesty had, in express terms, promised him to be called to all councils, when any, in what place soever, should be summoned, that he could not believe but this

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[96] "Vorleden Sondag in den avont wierde in de Conings bedcamer een conseil gehouden en bij hare ordres circulaire brieven na diverse quartieren aan de Rooms Catholique afgesonden, en gisteren avont quam tydinge al of de Rooms Catholiquen in Lancastershire ter nomber van 7000 alrede onder de wapenen waren geraakt om haar by den Coning te voegen." Letter to the states general, Westminster, 30 November 1688 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 512.

[97] Luttrell, iii. 5.

> proceeding of the queen, in leaving him out in any consultations, must proceed from a mistake, and therefore desired me to go to her majesty, and to acquaint her, how he understood himself to be left here, entrusted with your majesty's business of the most secret concerns. I waited upon the queen accordingly, and she was pleased to permit me to tell my lord again, that your majesty's instructions to her were, that there should be no cabinet council; but lords should be summoned, sometimes one, and sometimes another, as they should be judged most proper for the business they were to advise about; only some whose employments belong to the crown, made it necessary they should not be excluded.

With this answer Normanby was not satisfied. Shrewsbury feared he might be discontented. He did not know what value the king placed upon Normanby's services. He believed, however, that the present method of holding "secret councils" would certainly afford the same reason for discontent to the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, and others who were not constantly admitted.[98] Shortly after he wrote that there were other inconveniences attending this method: it not being allowable to hold a council—that is, of the cabinet—"we cannot so well summon the admiralty, nor other persons, to attend, whose information we often stand in need of".[99] It is evident from minutes which Shrewsbury took at this time that none the less there were some meetings of the cabinet council held during William's absence that year. A little later the king replied.[100]

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[98] Shrewsbury to William III, Whitehall, 11/21 May 1694: Coxe, *Correspondence of Shrewsbury,* pp. 34, 35.

[99] Letter of 15/25 May 1694: *ibid.,* p. 36.

[100] William to Shrewsbury, 22 May/1 June 1694: *ibid.,* pp. 38, 39.

> It is true, that I did promise my lord Normanby, that when there was a cabinet council, he should assist at it; but surely this does not engage either the queen or myself, to summon him to all the meetings, which we may order, on particular occasions, to be attended solely by the great officers of the crown, namely, the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, and the two secretaries of state. I do not know the reason why lord Sydney [master of the ordnance] was summoned to attend, unless it was on account of some business relative to the artillery, which, however, might have been communicated to him. I do not see that any objection can be made to this arrangement, whenever the queen summons the aforesaid officers of the crown, to consult on some secret and important affair. Assuredly that number is fully sufficient, and the meeting cannot be considered as a cabinet council, since they are distinguished by their offices, from the other counsellors of state, and therefore no one can find fault if they are more trusted and employed than others.
>
> I entirely agree with you, that if Lord Normanby is admitted, all those who have ever attended any cabinet council should likewise have a seat. Doubtless the queen communicates to him the business, that is to be discussed, and places confidence in him, with which he ought to be contented; but if he forces us to have a regular cabinet council, merely that he may attend, and when we do not deem it advantageous for the welfare of our service, it is assuming too much.

Shrewsbury rejoined that Normanby was not satisfied with being left out, "because the meeting is not to have the name of a cabinet council".[101] Evidently here was a smaller group of the king's principal councillors to whom for the most part at this time William desired to give over important business. It may be added that Normanby was present at meetings of the cabinet council, and on one occasion at least at a meeting of "the committee".[102]

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[101] Letter of 1/11 June 1694: *ibid.,* p. 40.

In 1698 William wrote to the earl of Portland that he had communicated despatches to the lord chancellor—Lord Somers, but not before the cabinet council.[103] Later that year a memorandum on affairs in England declared that few were acquainted with the king's secrets; that his secretaries of state, excepting only Shrewsbury, had been like hired clerks, who had only the despatch of current affairs in their offices, but no share whatever in his secrets, which were only communicated to his Dutch favorites; that the privy council and the cabinet were, properly speaking, for sake of form only.[104] It is well known that in 1698 Secretary Vernon drew up a blank commission authorizing plenipotentiaries, whose names were not stated, to conclude a treaty, the nature of which was not specified, and that to this commission the lord chancellor affixed the great seal. When in 1701 William's foreign policy was attacked in the house of lords, and the earl of Portland—groom of the stole—directly, Portland obtained the king's leave to say that he had not concluded the partition treaty alone, but had by the king's order acquainted six of the chief ministers with it: the earl of Pembroke—lord privy seal, the earl of Marlborough—commander in chief, Viscount Lonsdale—vice chamberlain of the household, Somers—lord chancellor, Lord Halifax—first lord of the treasury, and

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[102] Letter of 1/11 June 1694: pp. 65, 66.

[103] Letter from Kensington, 13/23 February 1698: Grimblot, *Letters*, i. 180, 181.

[104] Written probably by the Abbé Renaudot, 2 December 1698: *ibid.*, ii. 191, 192.

Secretary Vernon. But it appeared that when they had raised objections they were told no alterations could be made.[105]

Afterwards and during the eighteenth century there were numerous instances of the sovereign having his favorite minister or a small group in whom he trusted most. In the time of George III Bute aroused suspicion almost as great as Buckingham had long before, just as in the time of William and of Anne there had been small, interior groups of ministers as under James II and his brother before him. Gradually, however, with the waning of royal power and increase in the greatness of parliament and of ministers, these small groups were significant not so much in connection with the king as in the development of informal conferences of the principal officials or of the so-called "private meetings" of the eighteenth century. However important favorites or small informal groups of the king's servants may have been at various times, and notwithstanding that the term "cabinet" may have been applied, at least roughly, to such groups on occasion, it was not therefrom for the most part that the cabinet council developed. Rather the source is discovered in the system of committees of the privy council.

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[105] Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* iv. 469, 470. According to the envoy of Prussia, during one of the debates in parliament: "Ils ajouterent qu'il falloit abolir une Cabale qui entreprenoit de regler les affaires les plus importantes, commes des Alliances, des Traités &c. sans la participation du Conseil." Frédéric Bonet to the king of Prussia, 7/18 March 1700-1: Add. MS. 30000 E, fo. 70.

# CHAPTER XII

## ORIGIN OF THE CABINET COUNCIL IN ENGLAND

AFTERWARDS when men thought of the origin of the cabinet council in England, generally it was assumed to have arisen from the privy council. Writing about 1740 Roger North, with opportunities to be well informed about some of the history of the cabinet, said: " as the offices of the law, out of clerkships, spawn other offices, so this council was derived from the Privy Council, which, originally, was the same thing ".[1] According to a newsletter of 1691, a speaker in the house of commons declared that following a bad principle they had a cabinet council, which was an abridgement of the privy council.[2] In 1734 a writer averred: " The King may declare to, or conceal from his *Privy Counsellors,* whatever he thinks fit; and has a select Council out of their Number commonly called, *The Cabinet Council,* with whom his Majesty determines such Affairs, as are most important, and require the utmost Secrecy." [3] The exact process of development, however, was never clearly marked and seldom specifically stated. Afterwards, as will be seen, there was dispute whether the cabinet was a committee of the council or not. It is the purpose of a series of chapters following to demonstrate that generally the cabinet council, junto, or cabal, in England was that committee of the privy council which was avowedly appointed for foreign affairs.[4]

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[1] *Lives of the Norths,* ii. 50.

[2] " En suite par un' mauvais principe ils eurent un conseil de Cabinet qui est l'abregé du conseil privé." Newsletter, London, 6/16 November 1691: *Denbigh MSS., H.M.C.,* 7th report, appendix, p. 206.

[3] *The True State of England, Containing the Particular Duty, Business and Salary of Every Officer, Civil and Military in All the Publick Offices of Great Britain* (London, 1734), p. 1.

It is probable that there were many occasions when the size of the privy council, the consequent delay in finishing business, the difficulty of keeping important secrets when shared by more than a few, made it seem desirable to constitute a smaller council of most important advisers of the crown. This might well have developed soon into a "cabinet council". In the summer of 1555 among the instructions left by Philip, husband of Mary, for the queen's council, before his departure from England, was a provision that from among the members of the council particular ones were to constitute a body to which would be committed special care of important matters, finances, and causes. The members were to be Cardinal Pole—when it was convenient to consult him, and when he was willing, and eight others: the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, the earl of Arundel—lord president, the earl of Pembroke—lieutenant general, the bishop of Ely, Lord Paget—the lord privy seal, the comptroller, and a secretary.[5] Philip intended that the said councillors should deliberate concerning parliament, when it was to be held, what things ought to be proposed and done there.[6] Two years later another envoy of Venice wrote that he had learned as a great secret that the king finding the queen with twenty-six councillors—the grade being an honorary one, conferred on all from whom she had anything to hope or to fear in order to keep them under obligation, had reduced them to only six of his most trusty adherents, without, however, displacing the others, so as not to provoke them. He had arranged with the queen and those six that matters of importance were to be treated by them alone, the less momentous business to be discussed by all together.[7] Exhaustive research through the miscellaneous records of this time might reveal other experiments of the sort, but generally such was not the line of conciliar development during the second half of the sixteenth century. Under Elizabeth the privy council was small and efficient, reaching the summit of its greatness and actual power.

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[4] This was to some extent stated in 1898 by that able and careful writer, Miss H. C. Foxcroft: "The Committee for Foreign Affairs or inner circle of the Council, the germ of the modern Cabinet": *Life of Halifax,* i. 59, note.

[5] "Imprimis, pro meliori et magis expedita deliberatione, in ijs quæ in Consilio nr̄o agenda sunt ex reliquis Consiliarijs nr̄is, eos quorum nomina sequuntur seligendos putauimus, quibus spēialem curā omniū Causarum status, finantiarum et aliarū Causarum grauiorum Regni, com̄ittendam duximus et com̄ittimus . . . Consiliarij prædicti . . . considerabunt omnes Causas status, omnes Causas financiarū, statum possessionū, Debitorū, et quomodo debita cum honore solui possint; et generaliter, omnes alias causas maioris momenti, tangentes honorē dignitatē et statum Coronæ." British Museum, Cotton MS., Titus, B, ii, fo. 160. Writing about this time the Venetian ambassador declared he had heard that according to the king's suggestion a sort of privy council would be established for matters of state and importance, ordinary affairs and such as pertained to justice being referred to the one already existing, wherein many persons deemed sage had seats. In the new body, so

So it was for a time under James I, except that the new king was prone to reserve some principal matters or else consider them with his closest favorites and his secretaries only. Gradually, however, more important foreign matters and presently also miscellaneous matters of moment, were more and more given over to a committee of the privy council, composed of its most important and trusted members, and appointed to deal avowedly with foreign affairs. The earlier history of this development is obscure, and is not noted in the registers of

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far as he knew, were to be the cardinal, the chancellor, the earls of Arundel and Pembroke, the treasurer, the bishop of Ely, Lord Paget, and Secretary Petre. Giovanni Michiel to the doge and the senate, London, 9 September 1555: *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian,* VI. i. 183.

[6] Cotton MS., Titus, B, ii. fo. 160.

[7] Michiel Surian to the doge and the senate, Westminster, 3 April 1557: *Calendar S.P., Venetian,* VI. ii. 1004.

the council that survive. Probably the beginning was in connection with what was in its time the all-important matter of the proposed Spanish marriage. In 1615 Gondomar spoke of a committee (*junta*) which, it was said, would treat concerning the marriage of the prince with the infanta.[8] Next year he spoke specifically of the *junta* appointed by the king of England to treat about the marriage.[9] The term "cabinet council" was now being used by Englishmen and also by foreigners who described English affairs, but no evidence has been discovered that the committee of the council for the Spanish marriage, of which Gondomar spoke, was by any one called cabinet council. A few years later, however, the term was being used by Englishmen in respect of a small, powerful group of confidential councillors in England, and thereafter evidence increases that this designation, or else the term "junto", was used of a privy council committee concerned primarily with foreign affairs.

In June 1622 John Chamberlain wrote of "a choise cabinet counsell" to be selected from the whole council; "in w^ch^ number"—so that the writer seems not to have enumerated all of the members—would be besides Prince Charles, the duke, the lord treasurer, the lord chamberberlain, the lord marshal, the two marquises, and the secretary of state—there was only one at the moment. "Matters of most secrecie and importance" were committed to them. All seven were of the twelve "commissioners for forain affaires" specified by Chamberlain a year later.[10] In 1622 also a Venetian ambassador gave account of a cabinet containing four or five members besides the prince and the duke.[11] In 1623 Chamberlain, again writing to Sir Dudley Carleton, said: " We speake of commissioners named to treat w$^{th}$ the Spanish Ambassadors about this match, I have not yet heard who they be, but I presume the cheife of the counsaile ".[12] In November he wrote, after the return of the prince and Buckingham from Spain, that the duke gave a relation of the affair at " a meeting of certain selected counsaillors at S$^{t}$ James ".[13] About the same time the Tuscan envoy wrote back to his government that a courier having arrived from Spain the king had held his secret council in his own chamber.[14] Shortly after Chamberlain spoke of the frequent meetings of " the selected commissioners for forain affaires ", twelve in number.[15] Later still he reported the rumor that " the junta or commission for forain affaires " was to be reduced in size, since complete secrecy had not been kept.[16] Early in 1624 the Spanish ambassador wrote that a council of state (privy council) and afterwards a *junta* had met to consider the marriage.[17] This was most probably the foreign committee which Chamberlain mentioned, for in another communication the ambassador described it as containing twelve members.[18] At this very time Chamberlain wrote that " the junta for forrain affaires " had been sitting much, and described a division of opinion therein that the ambassador was recounting in his own communications to the court of Spain.[19] Another contemporary also wrote of the division among "the Committees for the Spanish Match".[20] That this committee was not merely a portion of the council appointed to deal with foreign matters but virtually a small council for consideration of various important things is apparent from another communication that summer which said that the earl of Bristol was to be tried before "the olde Committee of the LL$^{ds}$ for foreigne affaires".[21]

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[8] Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, ix. 30 May 1615 (N. S.).

[9] *Ibid.*, xvii. 141.

[10] S. P. D., James I, cxxxi, 8 June 1622; cliv, 22 November 1623.

[11] *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 4th series, i. 247, 248.

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[12] S. P. D., James I, cxlvii, 28 June 1623.

[13] *Ibid.*, cliv, 8 November 1623.

[14] " Hasta bene che la Maestà Sua tenne consiglio segreto nella sua propria camera et subito rispeditte in Spagna un altro corriero." Despatch of Amerigo Salvetti, London, 24 November 1623: Add. MS. 27962 C, fo. 70.

[15] S. P. D., James I, cliv, 22 November 1623.

[16] *Ibid.*, clv, 20 December 1623.

[17] Spanish Transcripts, 2d series, xxxi, 8 January 1624 (N. S.).

[18] *Ibid.*, 21 January 1624 (N. S.).

[19] S. P. D., James I, clviii, 31 January 1623-4.

At the beginning of his reign Charles I appointed by commission five of his principal councillors to deal with his most important business, especially foreign affairs: the lord treasurer—James, Lord Ley, the lord admiral—the duke of Buckingham, the lord chamberlain—the earl of Pembroke, Lord Conway—secretary of state, and Fulk, Lord Brooke;[22] or any three of them.

> Whereas the heads and principall points of State Contained in the Articles hereund$^{r}$ menc̄oned, are of Speciall consequence for o$^{r}$ hon$^{r}$ and service, the Setling of o$^{r}$ owne Estate, and Establishing the Governement of o$^{r}$ Kingdomes and dominions in safetie and peace. Wee out of o$^{r}$ assured confidence of yo$^{r}$ wisdome fidelity and Circumspection, haue made speciall choice of yo$^{u}$, To whom by this speciall warrant and private Com̄ission und$^{r}$ o$^{r}$ Signe Manuall, wee haue thought fitt to com̄unicate the trust and recom̄end the care of o$^{r}$ affaires of soe high nature & importance, Requiring and Authorizing yo$^{u}$ hereby to take the said articles, and all other articles and directions, w$^{ch}$ yo$^{u}$ shall hearafter

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[20] William Pelham to Sir Edward Conway: *ibid.*, clix, 12 February 1623-4. As to this earlier usage instead of the later collective term "committee", see Turner, *The Privy Council of England,* ii. 181-3.

[21] Dudley Carleton to Sir Dudley Carleton: S. P. D., James I, clxvii, 14 June 1624.

[22] The Tuscan envoy gives Lord Brooke as one of the secretaries of state. Letter to the grand duke of Tuscany, London, 2 May 1625: *H. M. C.,* 11th report, appendix, i. 10.

> receiue from us under o$^{r}$ Signe Manuall into serious considerac̄on, and to treat, consult, debate, and resolue from time to time amongst yo$^{r}$ selues, what shalbe fittest to be done in each p̄ticular for o$^{r}$ hono$^{r}$ and service and thereof w$^{th}$ the reasons of yo$^{r}$ Councell therein, to make report to us, by waie of humble advice, according to the great trust reposed in yo$^{u}$ by us, and y$^{r}$ faith and duetie by w$^{ch}$ you are bounden to us, that wee may giue such further order for putting the same in execution, as wee shall find most expedient. And these o$^{r}$ Lr̄es shalbe yo$^{r}$ warrant concerning the premisses.

The business commended to their consideration concerned relations with neighboring kings, princes, and states, especially Spain; the desirability of a league offensive and defensive with France, to which the king was favorably inclined; the best way to recover the Palatinate; England's course with respect to a treaty made by James I at the Hague with Denmark, Sweden, and divers German princes; the establishment and equipment of a militia in England; the best means of employing the navy to uphold the king's rights and maintain the surety of his kingdom.[23] Two weeks later Chamberlain wrote to Carleton that there was talk of a " selected or cabinet counsaile ", consisting of Buckingham, the lord treasurer, the lord chamberlain, Lord Brooke and Lord Conway.[24] About the same time the Tuscan envoy wrote that the king had selected five members of the privy council to unite the two courts—his late father's and his own. He spoke of the appointment thus of Buckingham, Pembroke, Brooke and Conway, omitting Lord Ley. They were to be the king's select confidants, to settle with him the most important affairs of state. This was very mortifying to other members of the privy council.[25] In June Walter Yonge, writing his diary in the country, recorded that the king had chosen six of the nobility "for his *Council of the Cabinet*". Rumor had brought to him three of the names correctly. He added two who were not named in the commission of the king, and left in his record space for the name of a sixth member supposed to have been appointed.[26] It may be—though the evidence is too scanty for certain conclusion—that during these earlier years the "cabinet" contained a smaller number than the committee of foreign affairs and it may have been either a less formal body or else an inner group of the committee.

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[23] S. P. D., Charles I, i, 9 April 1625.

[24] *Ibid.,* 23 April 1625.

Writing that autumn Sir Julius Cæsar asserted that it appeared from some of the bookes—old records of the council, it may be—that in the time of King Edward VI, and before and afterwards, "it was accustomed that some of the P Counsell mette allmost every day to receive lett^rs from all parts of the kingdome, of the weekly state of the marketts, and . . . wants of the Countrye, and of all intelligences of businesse both at home and abroade, fitt for the knowledge of such a Counsell, as be watchfull either for the kings saftie, or generall good of such a kingdome".[27] In 1626 it was proposed "To recommend to the Councell of State and Councell of Warre to sitt euery day untill resolutions shall bee taken in the poynts following": the fleet, satisfying the people with respect to the dissolution of parliament and casting the fault where it belonged; defense of the kingdom; foreign affairs; Ireland; the musters. Also "That his Ma$^{ty}$ will bee pleased upon the accompts giuen him of the Councells and executions to deliberate with his Com̄ittee upon such p$^{r}$posicions and Ouertures as shall be made, and to giue order for the prosecution of them".[28] It is probable, though not certain, that the small group which Charles had established for consideration and despatch of his important concerns was being designated thus as the particular committee.

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[25] Amerigo Salvetti to the grand duke of Tuscany, London, 2 May 1625: *H.M.C.*, 11th report, appendix, i. 10.

[26] *Diary of Walter Yonge, Esq.*, p. 83.

[27] S.P.D., Charles I, viii, 31 October 1625. In 1552, at a time when the privy council contained thirty-one, while nine others were to be added to "commissions," Edward VI ordered "the councelours aboue named, to be thus deuided into seueral commissions." One was constituted "For the state," containing twenty members, almost all of whom were important or leading members of the council: "Thies to attend the matters of the state" once a week, "to here the debating of thinges of most importaunce." Other committees met for suits, to deal with offenders, with the courts, with debts, with the bulwarks. Cotton MS., Nero, C, x. 84, 85; J. G. Nichols, *Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth* (Roxburghe Club, London, 1857), ii. 498-502. See Turner, *The Privy Council of England,* ii. 179, 180.

About this time also an account of affairs in England was written perhaps by Secretary Conway or else by one of his clerks. He says that when danger from Spain was looming up—after the failure of the negotiations for a marriage—"it was consulted upon . . . by the greate wisdome of his Ma$^{ty}$ of glorious memory: the Prince then, our Gratious King now: and a select number of the most confident Counsello$^{rs}$ his late Ma$^{ty}$ had: and that not for disestimation of the Rest but that the consultations and resolutions might remaine the more priuate".[29] Later, he says, when Charles had come to the throne, and a fleet had been prepared for operation against Spain, "a select Com̄ittee was appointed to consider and advise him w$^{ch}$ waie this ffleete might most advantagiously be employed". In the margin the writer has noted the names of the members: the lord treasurer, the duke, the lord chamberlain, Lord Conway, and Lord Brooke.[30]

Early in 1627 the Venetian ambassador wrote that Charles had recently held three long conferences in his private cabinet, with four or six confidential advisers, a mode of meeting which was practiced, he says, solely with regard to matters of importance.[31] Later that year he declared that Charles was coming to Windsor, where all the lords, of the great and of the private council, were to be.[32] A little afterward the king gave an account of matters that concerned the Venetian ambassador to his private cabinet (*Gabinetto privato*).[33] Shortly after Contarini thought it well to confer with the lord steward and the lord chamberlain, who were among the chief personages of " the court and the king's cabinet ".[34]

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[28] S. P. D., Charles I, xxx, 17 June 1626.

[29] *Ibid.*, xxi. 86.

[30] *Ibid.*

Writing forty years later Clarendon gave an account of the court just after the death of Buckingham in 1628: " who were the chief ministers that had the principal management of public affairs in Church and State ".[35] He says that there were many honorable persons at that time in the privy council whose attainments were not sufficient to give them great part in affairs, so their advice had small influence upon them.[36] " The several persons in authority in Court and Council " then were the lord keeper—Sir Thomas Coventry, the lord high treasurer—Sir Richard Weston, lord privy seal—earl of Manchester, the earl of Arundel and Surrey—earl marshal, lord steward—earl of Pembroke, lord chamberlain—earl of Montgomery, the earl of Dorset—commissioner of the admiralty, the earl of Carlisle—gentleman of the bedchamber, and three years later groom of the stole, the captain of the guard—earl of Holland, and the two secretaries of state—Sir John Coke and Sir Dudley Carleton.[37] With respect to this testimony it is necessary to remember not merely the lapse of time but also that Hyde then held no part in the small group of most important councillors, as was the case increasingly after 1641, and so notably after 1660.

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[31] Letter of Alvise Contarini, London, 8 January 1627 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xiii. 260.

[32] " Del Consiglio e grande e privato." Letter of 16 August 1627 (N. S.): *ibid.*, xiv. 543.

[33] Letter of Alvise Contarini, 11 January 1628 (N. S.): *ibid.*, xv. 717.

[34] Letter of 30 January 1628 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xv. 929.

[35] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, i. 56.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 83.

Previously it was stated that for the period of Charles I lists of standing committees of the council are prefixed to some volumes of the council register. In 1628, or about that time, it would appear that the "Commiss$^{rs}$ for forraigne affaires" were [38]

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord treasurer | Baron Weston |
| lord president | Viscount Conway |
| earl marshal | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| lord steward | earl of Pembroke |
| gentleman of the bedchamber | earl of Carlisle |
| captain of the guard | earl of Holland |
| secretary of state | Viscount Dorchester |

The list may have been put at a later time in the place where it appears. Indeed, just when these various lists were made cannot be known now, and it is necessary to use them with caution. In the next list of the committee that appears, which from the volume of the council register where it occurs would seem to relate to the year 1634 or thereabouts, is the name of the lord keeper, which is nevertheless crossed out since he is marked as dead, yet Coventry, the incumbent, held the office until 1640.[39] At all events, the cabinet cannot be completely identified with the committee of foreign affairs at this time, in so far as the principal evidence is drawn from the council lists, since allusions to the cabinet by contemporaries include also some of those whom Clarendon names and who do not appear in the register lists. In March 1629 Contarini says that after the speaker had been held in his chair in the house of commons, frequent cabinet councils were held by day and by night, the king always present. There was division, since the keeper of the seal was in favor of gentleness; the treasurer worked for a rupture, which followed.[40]

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[37] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion,* i. 56, pp. 56-83.

[38] P. C. R., xxxix. 1, 11.

[39] P. C. R., xliv. 3.

Increasingly, however, there is evidence that the committee of foreign affairs was the important group of king's councillors who dealt with the greater things and whose favor was to be sought. In 1631 Lord Dorchester—who as Sir Dudley Carleton had formerly received so much news himself when abroad—wrote to the ambassador in Vienna that what he had done was approved by his majesty and " by all my Lords to whom his Majesty doth entrust his Foreign Affairs ".[41]

In 1634 Sir Francis Nethersole, who represented in England the interests of Elizabeth, queen of Bohemia, having offended Charles I by an indiscretion, was summoned by Secretary Coke to come instantly " to my LL$^{dds}$ of the counsell ", in " the Counsell chamber ". He fearing that he was not sent for to be spoken with " by my ll of the Committee for forrayne affayres ", but was in danger of being arrested, instructed his wife to send various papers to the Dutch ambassador at once. Then " Comming to my ll. of the Committee " he was told that he was under arrest.[42] According to Secretary Windebank there was " The examinac̄on of S$^{r}$ fr: Neth: K$^{t}$ taken before the L: Tr̄er the Er: Marshall, the Er: of Carlile, the Er: of Holland, Mr. Secr Coke, & Secr:

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[40] Letter of 16 March 1629 (N.S.): Venetian Transcripts, xvii. 2299.

[41] Letter of 31 October 1631: *Letters from and to Sir Dudley Carleton*, etc. (2d ed., London, 1775), appendix to the preface, p. lv.

[42] S. P. D., Charles I, cclviii, 9 January 1633-4.

Windebank at Whitehall :9: January: 1633 ".[43] According to one of Strafford's correspondents the examination was before the committee of foreign affairs, which the writer also calls junto.[44]

For 1634 or after that time the members of the committee of foreign affairs appear in the council register:

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord keeper | Baron Coventry |
| lord treasurer | earl of Portland |
| earl marshal | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| groom of the stole | earl of Carlisle |
| high steward to the queen | earl of Holland |
| chancellor of the exchequer | Lord Cottington |
| comptroller | Sir Henry Vane |
| secretary of state | Sir John Coke |
| secretary of state | Sir Francis Windebank |

The names of Cottington and the comptroller are crossed out, but this may have been done at a later time when perhaps they were for a while left out. The name of the lord keeper is also crossed, and he is marked " dead ", though his decease occurred in 1640.[45] Laud was admitted to the foreign committee in March 1635.[46] Carlisle died

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[43] S. P. D., Charles I, cclviii, 9 January 1633-4, fo. 37.

[44] " Some new Prank is come into Sir *Francis Nethersole's* little Head. On *Sunday* last he was before the Committee for foreign Affairs, who committed him to the Custody of Mr. *Trumbull,* but he slipt from him, at the Rising of the Juncto, and absented himself until *Monday* Night." Rev. G. Garrard to the lord deputy of Ireland, 9 January 1633-4: *Strafford Letters,* i. 177.

[45] P. C. R., xliv. 3. The comptroller had earlier been spoken of as a member of " the Cabinett." Sir Thomas Roe to the queen of Bohemia, 14/24 July 1630: S. P. D., Charles I, clxx.

[46] Diary, *Works,* iii. 223.

25 April 1636, being succeeded by Holland as groom of the stole. During these years the committee may have contained seven—the archbishop, the lord treasurer, the lord marshal, Carlisle, Holland, the two secretaries; or nine—including also the chancellor of the exchequer and the comptroller; or eight—after the death of Carlisle. The lord keeper seems not to have continued to serve.

In January 1634 the lord deputy had written a letter from Ireland to Secretary Coke. Upon part of it the king made a marginal note that he had for greater secrecy communicated the affairs only to the archbishop, the lord treasurer, the lord marshal, Cottington, and the two secretaries.[47] Indeed, about this time the lord treasurer proposed that Charles, in view of the importance of Irish business and the necessity of despatch, should lessen the former Irish committee, to contain only the archbishop, the lord treasurer, Lord Cottington, and the two secretaries.[48] It would thus have been manned almost exclusively by members also of the foreign committee. With respect to the earlier part of the next year a Venetian report declared that the lord treasurer especially, and then the earls of Holland, Carlisle, and Arundel, Lord Cottington, and the secretaries were highest in the king's favor.[49] In the privy council, said the writer, effective management of important matters was restricted to a few.[50]

In March 1635 died the earl of Portland—formerly Lord Weston, lord treasurer. The treasury thereupon went into commission. In April the French ambassador wrote that since the death of the treasurer there was a commission of five for finance, and for affairs of state a committee of six. The committee of state contained, besides the archbishop of Canterbury—who was first in importance in both groups, the earls of Arundel, Carlisle, and Holland, and the two secretaries.[51] About the same time Sir Thomas Roe advised Elizabeth of Bohemia and her son to court Archbishop Laud, " for this is the great man; made now of the Commission of the Treasurie: and the first of the Junto of forreyne affayres ".[52] Elizabeth accordingly wrote to tell him how glad she was that her brother had taken him into " the Councells of his state & forrain affaires ".[53] In 1636, when the bishop of London had been appointed lord treasurer, a contemporary reported that he had been made " of the Junto for Foreign Affairs ".[54]

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[47] *Strafford Letters,* i. 194.

[48] S. P. D., Charles I, cclxii, 5 March 1633-4.

[49] "Tra i quali li conti d'Holland, di Carlisle, di Arundell, li cavalieri Coltileton, e pure li secretarj Lunch e Vindebanch hanno luoco di grazia e di favore speciale posso la Maestà Sua." Relazione di Vicenzo Gussoni (1635): *Relazioni degli Stati Europei,* 4th series, i. 311.

[50] *Ibid.,* p. 310.

It may be observed that the committee of foreign affairs was at this time holding some of its meetings, perhaps regluar ones, each week, on Sunday, as did the " cabinet " and " the committee " later on. There was a Sunday meeting of the foreign committee in July.[55] On Michaelmas day that year Charles proposed for consideration of the foreign committee what answer he should make to the French ambassador about a closer understanding with

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[51] " La mort du Grand Trésorier a changé le Gouvernement des finances de luy seul en ung Conseil de cinq et les affaires d'Estat en un de six: en l'une et en l'autre compagnie l'Archevesque de Cantorbery est le premier en credit et en authorité. Après luy suivent pour les affaires, les C^tes^ d'Arondel, Carlisle et de Holland, les Secrétaires Rouques et Windebang, les quelz nous ont esté donnez pour Commissaires." Letter of M. de Senecterre to M. Bouthillier, 4 April 1635 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, lxviii. 146.

[52] Letter to the queen of Bohemia, 5 April 1635: S. P. D., Charles I, cclxxxvi.

[53] Letter to Laud, 20/30 April 1635: *ibid.*, cclxxxvii.

[54] Reverend G. Garrard to the lord deputy, 15 March 1635-6: *Strafford Letters,* i. 525.

[55] Laud to the queen of Bohemia, 22 July 1635: *Works,* vii. 152.

France; whether he should declare neutrality: the members to be ready with opinions the following Sunday.[56]

In the council register for 1636 the list of the committee for foreign affairs is given as

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord keeper | Baron Coventry |
| lord treasurer | William Juxon, bishop of London |
| earl marshal | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| groom of the stole | earl of Holland |
| chancellor of the exchequer | Lord Cottington |
| comptroller | Sir Henry Vane |
| Secretary Coke | |
| Secretary Windebank | |

This is almost a copy of the preceding list. It may not be strictly contemporary, and cannot be entirely relied on. Again Cottington and the comptroller are crossed out, while the earl marshal is inserted.[57]

References to the cabinet, junto, secret council, and foreign committee continue, and apparently relate to the same group of selected councillors. In 1636 the Venetian ambassador wrote that the pacific policy of the English cabinet would not change.[58] In September there is a copy of a letter which Windebank's endorsement affirms to have been written by his majesty's command and resolved on "at the Foreign Committee".[59] A little later, when Charles had determined on sending an extraordinary embassy to the court of Savoy, the marquis of Hamilton wrote that " the man who most of the Joanto piched on was the Lo: Connoauy ".[60] In December Correr, the Venetian, reported that Charles had been assiduous all the week in his most secret council.[61] A few days later Secretary Coke writing to Secretary Windebank said: " The foren com̄ittie did not meet: only his M$^{ty}$ at the general councel heard su$^{m}$ matters concerning the ship monies ".[62]

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[56] S. P. D., Charles I, ccxcviii, 29 September 1635.

[57] P. C. R., xlvii. 1.

[58] Letter of Angelo Correr, 11 April 1636 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xix, 158.

[59] *Clarendon State Papers,* i. 662.

Towards the end of 1636 a memorial was sent by Elizabeth to the king, her brother, " who will consider of it at the first juncto ".[63] In January 1637 Sir Thomas Roe, at that time representing the interests of the queen of Bohemia in England, wrote to Laud, concerning advice which he sent: " If yo$^{u}$ see cause at the forreyne Committee, or to the king, yo$^{u}$ may read the Letters, or use them as yo$^{u}$ please ".[64] About that time also, apparently, Secretary Windebank in an undated communication declared: " I seldom com to the understanding of any thing of moment but at the forain Com̄ittee ". The king, he said, had commanded it to assemble every week, but it was meeting less often.[65] In February the earl of Northumberland writing to Strafford with respect to a proposed league with France, said " About this Matter the foreign Committee doth often attend the King, and on our Part all things are absolutely resolved of. The general Opinion is, that we shall break with *Spain* ".[66]

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[60] Marquis of Hamilton to Lord Feilding, ambassador in Italy, 3/13 November 1636: *Denbigh MSS., H. M. C.,* 4th report, part i, appendix, p. 256.

[61] " Sopra dei negotii stimati di considerazione senza dar luogo agli soliti piaceri della caccia, s'e veduto travagliare tutta questa settimana assiduamente il Re nel suo piu secreto consiglio." Letter of 19 December 1636 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xviii. 227.

[62] S. P. D., Charles I, cccxxxvii, 19 December 1636.

[63] Charles Louis, prince elector, to Sir Thomas Roe, 30 December/ 9 January 1636-7: *ibid.,* cccxxxviii.

[64] *Ibid.,* cccxliv, 21 January 1636-7.

[65] Letter to the earl of Leicester: *ibid.,* dxxxvii. 6.

[66] Letter of 7 February 1636-7: *Strafford Letters,* ii. 49.

Two persons had taken refuge in the house of Lord Feilding, English ambassador to Venice. Though he gave them temporary asylum, they were arrested. The ambassador's letter about it to the king was delivered to Secretary Coke. Sunday afternoon—at what may have been a foreign committee, though that is not stated—the king spoke thereon to the secretaries. On Wednesday "the junctto" was acquainted with the matter, and there it was resolved to communicate it to the "uhooll counsall".[67] The Venetian ambassador wrote back that Charles returning to London, convoked his cabinet council, wishing them to consider all the letters and papers from Feilding. He declares that the cabinet contained six members: the archbishop, the lord treasurer, the earls of Arundel and Holland, and the two secretaries.[68] Such enumeration corresponds with the lists of the committee for foreign affairs given in the register for 1636 and for 1638, except that it does not mention the lord keeper, whose name is crossed out in the register, and that it omits Cottington and the comptroller, whose names are also crossed out, who according to some evidence or else during some times were of the "cabinet" or the "committee" while according to other evidence or else during other times they seem not to have been members.

The list of the committee for foreign affairs given in the council register for 1638 is essentially that given for 1636; and the only change in the list of the committee given for 1639 is that then only six names were recorded, those which had in former lists been crossed out being omitted:

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[67] The marquis of Hamilton to Lord Feilding, council chamber, Whitehall, 10/20 March 1636-7: *Denbigh MSS., H.M.C.*, 4th report, i. 258.

[68] "Il di seguente convocato il consiglio del Gabinetto, in cui l'Arcivescovo di Canterbury, il Gran Thesoriero, il Conte d'Arundel, il Conte d'Oland et i due segretari di Stato soli intervengono." Letter of Angelo Correr, 23 March 1637 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xviii. 274. Some weeks later he referred to the "sei del Consiglio del Gabinetto". Letter to the doge and senate, 15 May 1637 (N. S.): *Cal. S. P. Venetian,* xxiv. 209.

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord treasurer | bishop of London |
| earl marshal | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| groom of the stole | earl of Holland |
| Secretary Coke | |
| Secretary Windebank | |

When this list was written is not known, and whether in 1639 Vane and Cottington had really been dropped is far from certain.[69] Thereafter no lists of a foreign committee appear in the registers of the council. In these years changes were made. During 1638 Scottish affairs rapidly worsened; certain councillors were chosen to give assistance with respect to such business; and the lord deputy was presently brought back from Ireland.

In 1638 what was called a Scottish committee was established. Apparently there is in the council register no record of the appointment of such a committee, nor do any lists of the members of such a committee appear among the standing committees of the privy council which the volumes contain. In July 1638 one of Strafford's correspondents informed him that the committee had been appointed: " The *Scotish* Businesses go not well; a Committee of some few of his Majesty's Council is made to consider of the Letters and Businesses which come thence; I hear they are, the Lord Treasurer, the Earl Marshal, the Lord *Cottington,* Mr. Secretary *Coke,* and the Comptroller ".[70] All of them may have been of the foreign committee at this time, though the status of Cottington and the comptroller, whose names are lined through in the council list of the foreign committee, may be uncertain for a portion of the time in which the lists containing their names appear. Apparently, particular business of much importance which had arisen was being given over to the consideration of some of the king's principal councillors especially. The most striking omission from the Scots committee was Laud. A little later he wrote: "what the Committee lately named for this business of Scotland do, I know not; for I am none of them".[71]

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[69] P.C.R., li, 1.

[70] Reverend G. Garrard to the lord deputy, 3 July 1638: *Strafford Letters,* ii. 181.

Meanwhile the foreign committee continued its activities. Laud speaks of going to it.[72] There is no doubt that the foreign committee was itself busied with Scots affairs. About the end of July Laud wrote to Wentworth that the negotiations with the Covenanters were being kept secret between Charles and the marquis of Hamilton: "at the Foreign Committee (where this business hath been three or four times in agitation) nothing hath been concluded, but the preparations to fortify Berwick and Carlisle".[73] In August the lord keeper wrote to Sir Thomas Roe that business about which Roe had written was "gov^r^ned here by his ma^tie^ and the forrein Co̅mittee".[74]

The Scottish Committee was enlarged and seems presently to have been no more than the committee for foreign affairs devoting itself to business about Scotland. Shortly after the first notices of the Scottish committee the earl of Northumberland—lord high admiral—wrote concerning it, that the earl marshal, Cottington, and Secretary Windebank—whom he spoke of as a member—urged the king to war; that the comptroller was for peace; that

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[71] Laud to Wentworth, 30 July 1638: *Works,* vii. 468.

[72] Letter to Sir Thomas Roe, 5 July 1638: *ibid.,* p. 458.

[73] *Ibid.,* p. 468.

[74] Letter of 16 August 1638: S. P. D., Charles I, cccxcvii. 56.

Secretary Coke rather inclined that way; that Charles had just summoned the lord admiral himself to attend the meeting.[75] In effect it was to this committee, apparently, that Charles by writ of privy seal entrusted the spending of £200,000 in sundry and special affairs of great importance and weight.[76]

In 1639 the archbishop, the lord deputy, and the marquis of Hamilton—whom Charles had chosen to negotiate with the Covenanters—were added to the Scotish committee.[77] At the same time, it would seem, Hamilton, the lord deputy, and the admiral were added to the foreign committee.[78] That is to say, by the latter part of 1639 the Scottish committee and apparently also—though with two possible exceptions—the committee for foreign affairs were made up of ten members:

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Laud |
| lord treasurer | bishop of London |
| earl marshal | earl of Arundel and Surrey |
| lord admiral | earl of Northumberland |
| lord deputy | Viscount Wentworth |
| master of the horse | marquis of Hamilton |
| chancellor of the exchequer | Lord Cottington |
| comptroller | Sir Henry Vane |
| Secretary Coke | |
| Secretary Windebank | |

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[75] Letter to the lord deputy, 23 July 1638: *Strafford Letters,* ii. 186.

[76] The lord treasurer, the earl marshal, the high admiral, Lord Cottington, the comptroller, and the two secretaries. S. P. D., Charles I, cccciv. 65.

[77] "My Lord Deputie is called in to consult of the *Scotch* Affaires, with the Arche Bishope, and *Hamilton.*" The earl of Northumberland to the earl of Leicester, London, 17 October 1639: *Sydney Papers,* ii. 614.

[78] "To the forraigne Committie, his Majestie hath now added Marquis *Hamilton,* the Deputie, and your humble Seruant." *Ibid.,* pp. 613, 614.

The last council list of the foreign committee that seems to be extant (1639) includes also the earl of Holland, but he may have been drifting away from adherence to the king, and a little later, as is well known, supported parliament at first. The notices of the Scots committee include Cottington and Vane. Both of them appear, though, with names lined through—the time of these marks being unknown, in the council lists of the foreign committee down to 1638, and it should be noted that in the early part of 1640 Vane succeeded Coke as secretary of state. Early in 1640 it is probable that foreign committee and Scottish committee were merely names to designate in respect of two different kinds of business the same body of select councillors of the king.

Apparently the principal group was reconstituted and somewhat reduced in the autumn of 1639. In October the lord admiral wrote: " We haue here a new Committie appointed by his Majesty, that for these 3 or 4 Dayes past, hath dayly attended him. Of this Committie there is the Arch Bishope, Lord Treasorer, Marq. *Hamilton,* Lord Deputie, Lord *Cottington,* Sir *Henry Vane,* Secritarie *Windebank,* and my selfe ".[79] From this group were omitted the earl marshal, the earl of Holland, and Coke. Northumberland had just spoken of joining the foreign committee.[80] His sister wrote that he had been called to the junto.[81]

In December 1639 was intercepted a letter which the Scotch Covenanters had written to the king of France, addressing it " Au Roy ". According to Clarendon this discovery made a very deep impression upon Charles.

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[79] The earl of Northumberland to the earl of Leicester, London, 24 October 1639: *Sydney Papers,* ii. 615.

[80] *Ibid.,* p. 613.

[81] " Three Days agoe, my Brother, wase calld to the *Junto,* and Yesterdaye my Lord *Hamilton,* and the Deputye." Lucy, countess of Carlisle to the earl of Leicester, 17 October 1639: *ibid.,* 614.

"Thereupon he first advised with that committee of the Council which used to be consulted in secret affairs, what was to be done?"[82] With the unanimous advice of the committee the king resolved to call a parliament, communicating his resolution that day "in his full Council of State"—by which Clarendon means the privy council.[83] Northumberland, who had previously on several occasions written about the Scots committee and who was on the foreign committee, wrote again to the earl of Leicester: "This Committie, as I haue formerly written to your Lordship, hath lately had seueral Meetings to consider, by what Means, the rebellious *Scotts* should be brought to Obedience".[84] At the same time Windebank wrote that the king had for the past six weeks been in continual consultations "with a select Committee of some of his Council (of which I have had the Honour to be one) how to redress his affairs in Scotland, the fire continuing there, and growing to that danger, that it threatens not only the Monarchial Government there, but even that of this Kingdom".[85]

Laud afterwards wrote that Charles, concerned at the trouble in Scotland, often called his council, "and in particular made a Committee of eight, more particularly to attend that service". The members, he says, perhaps not then recalling that Vane did not succeed Coke as Secretary until February 1640, were the lord treasurer, the marquis of Hamilton, the lord admiral, the lord deputy, Lord Cottington, Vane and Windebank—secretaries of state, and himself. At this committee diverse things were suggested, but at last Wentworth proposed the calling of a parliament.[86] Clarendon, writing that part of his account 1646-8, described this group as the committee of state, which men called the junto or cabinet:[87]

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[82] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion,* i. 170, 171.

[83] *Ibid.,* p. 172.

[84] Letter of 12 December 1639: *Sydney Papers,* ii. 623.

[85] Letter to Sir Arthur Hopton, 13 December 1639: *Clarendon State Papers,* ii. 81.

> The bulk and burden of the State affairs, whereby the envy attended them likewise, lay principally upon the shoulders of the lord archbishop of Canterbury, the earl of Strafford, and the Lord Cottington; some others being joined to them, as the earl of Northumberland for ornament, the lord bishop of London for his place, being Lord High Treasurer of England, the two Secretaries, sir H. Vane and sir Francis Winnibanke, for service and communication of intelligence; only the marquis of Hamilton indeed, by his skill and interest, bore as great a part as he had a mind to do, and had the skill to meddle no further than he had a mind. These persons made up the Committee of State, (which was reproachfully after called *the Juncto,* and enviously then in the Court *the Cabinet Council,*) who were upon all occasions when the Secretaries received any extraordinary intelligence or were to make any extraordinary dispatch, or as often otherwise as was thought fit, to meet: whereas the body of the Council observed set days and hours for their meeting, and came not else together except specially summoned.

There is no record in the council register of any committee of state, though that would not be decisive evidence against the existence of such a body at this time. It is more probable, however, that Clarendon's term is either his own or one used informally at the time to designate the principal group of the king's advisers. The membership is identical with what Laud describes as the Scots committee and with what appears from various sources to have been the foreign committee at this time. They were dealing with the business of Scotland, the principal concern of state then, while intelligence is the term long used in connection with foreign affairs.

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[86] *The History of the Troubles and Tryal of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Wrote by Himself during his Imprisonment in the Tower* (London, 1694), in *Works,* iii. 282, 283.

[87] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion,* i. 195, 196.

This group of councillors of the king dealt with important matters other than those pertaining immediately to Scots business: there are various allusions to the committee for foreign affairs; contemporaries speak of the committee as the cabinet or the junto. In 1640 was issued a warrant to the clerk of the signet to prepare for signature a bill containing a privy seal for £ 300,000 to be issued from time to time out of the exchequer for sundry and special affairs of great importance by order and direction of the lord treasurer, the marquis of Hamilton, the earl marshal, the lord high admiral, the lord deputy, Lord Cottington, Mr. treasurer—Vane, and Secretary Windebank.[88] From this list is wanting Laud, while the group includes the lord marshal, whose name appears formerly in the committees of foreign affairs listed in the register of the privy council, but inserted there, and perhaps inserted about this very time, and not in the lists given by Clarendon and Laud.

Meanwhile the lords who attend to foreign affairs are spoken of as "cabinet" or "junto". In January 1640 a certain one wrote with respect to the French releasing the prince elector, that "the k$^{g}$ and the Lo$^{ss}$ of the Junto" say that nothing can be done for the present.[89] Shortly after he wrote: "There is not anything which I doe now soe much sollicite here, as to beseech the King, and Lo$^{ss}$ of the Junto" what course the elector Palatine ought to follow. He added that the Scots commissioners had arrived and would be admitted to their first audience the next Sunday.[90] In February the Venetian ambassador spoke of the secret consultations of the cabinet.[91] A little later a correspondent wrote that the Scots commissioners had arrived and he had just learned that "this morning they were heard before the King & Cabinet Counsell by way of Petition".[92] In notes which he took of proceedings at various meetings Secretary Windebank described the group in question as "Comittee Couenanters".[93] In March in "a relation of newes from Court" an informant said "Yesterdaie the Scotch Commissio$^{rs}$ were heard before the King & the Cabinet Councell & behaued themselues verie discreetlie".[94] Almost at the same time Windebank wrote to Sir Thomas Roe that he had had opportunity "at the forain Com̄ittee" to obtain leave for him to return.[95]

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[88] S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxli, 3 January 1639-40.

[89] Sir Richard Gave to [Sir Thomas Roe], 10 January 1639-40: *ibid.*, fo. 92.

In March Charles gave account in the privy council of "what had passed att the Com̄ittee appointed by his Ma$^{tie}$ to heare those Lords and Gentlemen that came lately from Scotland".[96] Secretary Vane wrote to Roe that there had been three meetings at which the king had heard the Scots commissioners. He had been assisted by seven of the members of the committee—the lord deputy being away, but the earl of Traquaire also being present.[97] About the same time the Venetian ambassador wrote that

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[90] Letter of 7 February 1639-40: S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxliv. 54.

[91] "Altri Ministri partiali alla Francia et all' Olanda, non sono hora . . . chiamati conforme il solito all ordinarie secrete consulte del Gabinetto." Despatch of Giovanni Giustinian, London, 17 February 1640 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xxii. 221.

[92] Thomas Smith to Sir John Pennington, 20 February 1639-40: S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxlv. 81.

[93] *Ibid.*, ccccxlvii, 3, 9, 12 March 1639-40; Rushworth, *Historical Collections,* iii. 993, 997.

[94] S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxlvii. 301: apparently the correct date of the occurrence was 3 not 4 March 1639-40.

[95] Letter of 6 March 1639-40: S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxlvii, 42.

[96] P. C. R., li, 11 March 1639-40.

[97] Letter of 13 March 1639-40: S. P. D., Charles I, ccccxlvii. 107.

Charles and eight cabinet councillors were to hear the Scottish deputies again.[98] The Scots commissioners themselves wrote back that they had "had a hearing befor his Majesty and these of the private Committy or Cabin Counsell in England".[99] It should be recalled that a member of the "Committie" had specified eight members, the October before.

It is well known that Strafford was brought to the block specifically because of words alleged to have been spoken by him in the small council or committee of the king. Of the whole affair Clarendon gives extended account, writing this part of his narrative only a few years after the occurrence. In April 1641, following introduction of a bill for the attainder of Strafford, Pym declared in the house of commons that some months before the assembling of the Long Parliament he had visited young Sir Harry Vane, son of the secretary, then recovering from an ague. Condoling upon the sad state of the kingdom, Vane told him that if he would return next day he would be shown something from which he might see what counsels were like to be followed in England, "for that he had, in perusal of some of his father's papers, accidentally met with the result of the Cabinet Council upon the dissolution of the last Parliament". Next day Vane showed him a little paper in the secretary's writing. Pym desired permission to take a copy of it, since the matter was so important. Vane was at first unwilling, fearing to prejudice his father, but Pym told him it might be of extreme consequence and a sovereign means to preserve the church and the state. Vane then consented, and a careful copy was made. Pym had kept it all secret. Now he read the paper to the commons. Though Secretary Vane was in some respects the only witness against Strafford for treason, yet the younger Vane and Pym would both swear that the paper now brought forward was a true copy of the original one. Vane related that his father, then absent in the north with the king, had forwarded the keys to the boxes containing his papers, desiring particular ones sent to him. He seeing the paper just read thought he should communicate it to some one of better judgment than himself. Secretary Vane then confirmed the account of the incident, angrily declaring that he had since burned " the original results of those debates of which that which was read was pretended to be a copy ".[100]

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[98] "Con l'assistenza d'otto Consiglieri del Gabinetto s'è in fine lasciato persuadere il Re d'udire martedì di nuovo li Deputati di Scotia." Despatch of Giovanni Giustinian, 16 March 1640 (N.S.): Venetian Transcripts, xxiii. 10.

[99] The committee of estates to the earl of Athole, undated: *Athole MSS., H.M.C.,* 12th report, appendix, part vii. 26.

Of the meeting in question, 5 May 1640, some first hand evidence remains, and there are many contemporary comments upon it. Among the domestic state papers is a manuscript, the character of which cannot now be exactly determined, containing rough notes of speeches made at a meeting of king's councillors the day before Charles I dissolved the Short Parliament. There is no list of those present, but words said to have been spoken by the lord admiral, the lord lieutenant, Laud, and Cottington are reported. From other sources it is known that Vane and Windebank also were present.[101] Among other things Strafford said: [102]

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[100] Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion,* i. 301-5; iii. 131.

[101] " I haue receaued a signification of yo$^{r}$ Ma$^{ts}$ pleasure to declare & certify (upon my allegeance to yo$^{r}$ M:) whether in a debate in Counsell at a Com̄ittee, about a defensiue & offensiue Warre w$^{th}$ the Scotts, I do remember that the Lo: Lieutenant of Irelande did say to yo$^{r}$ M:, that . . . yo$^{u}$ were absolued from all rules of Gouernment." Secretary Windebank to Charles I, Paris, 26 April 1641: S. P. D., Charles I, cccclxxix. 37.

[102] S. P. D., Charles I, cccclii. 31; *Coke MSS., H. M. C.,* 12th report, ii. 253, 254.

> Goe vigorously on, or lett them a lone . . . goe on with an offenciue warr, as you first designed. loosd & absolued from all rules of gouermt. being reduced to extreame necessity, euery thing is to be done as power will admitt, & that you are to doe they refused, you are accquitted towards god & man. You haue an Army in Ireland you may ymploy here, to reduce this kingdome.

Clarendon describes the meeting as "the Committee of State (which they called *the Cabinet Council*)".[103] Laud afterwards wrote of it as "the private Committee concerning the Scotch affairs".[104] In the records of the house of lords it was called "a giunto of the Privy Council for Scotch affairs".[105] "That Paper", runs the record of the commons, "was a Copy of Notes, taken at a *Giunto* of the Privy-Council, for the *Scotch* Affairs, about the Fifth of *May* last."[106] Concerning his alleged speech Strafford himself, during his trial in Westminster Hall, said: "all the Councell of eight besides himselfe [Sir Henry Vane] discountenance the words, as if by a singular providence they had onely taken hold on his Eares."[107] According to Whitelock the notes were taken by Vane "at the Council-table of *Juncto,* May 5. 1640".[108] Lord Digby, speaking in the commons, referred to Pym's notes of "what pass'd at the Juncto", and spoke of "my Lord of *Northumberland,* and all others of the Juncto".[109]

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[103] *History of the Rebellion,* i. 296.

[104] *History of the Troubles, Works,* iii. 295.

[105] *House of Lords MSS., H. M. C.,* 3d report, appendix, pp. 1, 3.

[106] *Commons' Journals,* ii. 118.

[107] S. P. D., Charles I, ccccIxxix. 28.

[108] Sir Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs* (London, 1682), p. 41.

[109] Rushworth, *Historical Collections,* part iii, vol. i. 226; also *The Lord Digbyes Speech in the House of Commons, to the Bill of Attainder of the Earle of Strafford,* etc., in *Speeches and Passages of this Great and Happy Parliament* (London, 1641), p. 216.

Another contemporary spoke of "the Counsell table".[110] About the same time Laud was accused of telling the king at "the privy Jointo" that the Scots were rebels and traitors.[111] It may be recalled that in April 1642 a declaration of grievances drawn up by the two houses included a complaint that the great affairs of the realm had been managed and transacted "in private Cabinet Councils".[112]

Meanwhile in 1640 the select advisers of the king had been dealing with various matters under various names. In April Strafford wrote to Charles, urging that £10,000 of the money designed for the service of Ireland be made available at once: "And seriously unless we be complied withal punctually in that kind, as hath been assented to by your Majesty and the *Scotch* Committee, that Army will wholly fall to Ground".[113] In August there was a meeting at which were discussed local matters, the army, and various things great and small. Minutes of this meeting were endorsed by Windebank: "Notes of the Comı̄ttee of the: 8:".[114] About the same time, Charles having left for the north, there was a meeting attended by the archbishop, the lord treasurer, the lord lieutenant, Lord Cottington, and Windebank. Matters relating to London and to raising a loan were brought up.[115] Meanwhile one of the representatives abroad spoke of his diligence in writing information to members of the "forrayne committy".[116] From York Secretary Vane wrote back grave news of failure. Windebank was to represent to "the Committee" from his majesty to what desperate pass things were brought. This was to be communicated to the queen, "and soe much as you shal thinke fitt w$^{th}$ the lord$^{s}$ of the counsel".[117] A little later "the Co$\bar{m}$ittee" suggested to the king that he call the peers rather than a parliament.[118] During all this time the committee which some called the junto and others the cabinet was evidently also the committee of foreign affairs, or at all events that committee in which foreign affairs were dealt with. In August 1641 Charles Louis, elector palatine, wrote to Sir Thomas Roe: "I could wish you would also informe my L$^{d}$ of $\overset{\text{Essex}}{\text{30.46.52}}$ 111.112 of my businesse, for you know how well he is inclined towards it & the power he hath wth $\overset{\text{palament}}{\text{435}}$, besides the Juncto beeng disjointed, he will have a hand in forraine affaires as well as others".[119]

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[110] "And to make him more odious a paper was that afternoon produced & read in the cōmons howse wch yong Sr Hen: Vane is said to haue found casually in his Father's studie (as notes of passages at the Counsell table) wherein strange speeches of the said Erles were quoted." Nathaniel Tomkyns to [Sir John Lambe], 12 April 1641: S. P. D., Charles I, cccclxxix. 27.

[111] *The Charge of the Scottish Commissioners against the Prelate of Canterbvry,* in *Speeches and Passages,* etc., p. 514.

[112] *Lords' Journals,* iv. 690.

[113] Letter of 15 April 1640: *Strafford Letters,* ii. 411.

[114] S. P. D., Charles I, cccclxiii, 8 August 1640. Minutes of another meeting held shortly after are headed simply "16: August: 1640:": *ibid.,* cccclxiv. 8. Present were the king and nine—the comptroller, the lord keeper, the earls of Holland and Salisbury, the lord chief justice, the marquis of Hamilton, the lord lieutenant, Lord Cottington—constable of the Tower of London, and the archbishop. In the *Hardwicke State Papers,* ii. 147-151, the notes are described as "Minutes of Cabinet Council," on what authority is not asserted. Only four of those present were members—unless unrecorded changes had been made—of what was called the committee of state or cabinet council. Rather it would seem

During the interregnum period, just as conciliar development was such that the council came presently to be not unlike the privy council which the Stuarts had had, so there was some tendency towards management of im-

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that there was a gathering of some of the members of the Scots or foreign committee attended by a larger number of others who had been asked to come.

[115] S. P. D., Charles I, cccclxiv, 21 August 1640.

[116] Sir Balthazar Gerbier to Secretary Windebank, Brussels, 22 August/1 September 1640: *ibid.*, fo. 70.

[117] Letter of 25 August 1640: *ibid.*, fo. 95.

[118] *Ibid.*, cccclxvi, 3 September 1640.

[119] Letter from Whitehall, 6/16 August 1641: *ibid.*, cccclxxxiii. 15.

portant business by a select number of advisers, and occasionally there were references to " cabinet ", " junto ", or " cabal ". As in the time of Charles I there had been tendency for important committees to be manned largely by the same members, so it was in the time of the commonwealth. In 1650 it was ordered at the council of state that the committee for the Irish affairs should also be a committee for the army and for the affairs of Scotland.[120] In 1651 order was given that the committee for the ordnance and the committee for the affairs of Ireland " bee put both into one Comttee ".[121] In November 1653 four of the council of state were appointed to " be a Com̄ittee of Secrecie, to mannage the Intelligence that shall be received, and Com̄unicate the same to the Councell as they shall see cause ".[122] This has something of the aspect of a small committee of foreign affairs.

Under the protector the council was small and powerful as it had been two generations before. Frequently council meetings were held in the chamber of his highness, something in the way, perhaps, that cabinet councils originally were held in the sovereign's chamber.[123] There is some information about a committee of foreign affairs in the time of the protectorate, but that information is insufficient and scanty.

In 1660 a writer proposed a council of state composed of fifteen members, and a council of war, containing nine, chosen by the council of state from its own members· " the cognizance of all matter of State to be considered, or Law to be enacted, whether it be Provincial or National, Domestick or foreign, appertaine unto the Council of State. That such affaires of either kinde as they shall judge, to require more secrecy, be remitted by this Councel, and appertain unto the Council of War, being for that end a select part of the same." [124] Shortly after the Restoration a petitioner to the lords assembled in parliament declared: "I never was priuy to the Army's transactions about the late King at Holmby or else where, or of any Juncto, Counsell, or Caball." [125]

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[120] S. P. D., Interregnum, I 11, 8 October 1650.

[121] *Ibid.,* I 65, 3 March 1650-1.

[122] *Ibid.,* I 72, 8 November 1653.

[123] *Ibid.,* I 76, 8, 13, 15, 28 June 1655.

In origin, then, it would seem that for the most part what men called the "cabinet" was the committee of the privy council for foreign affairs, consisting of the principal ministers and advisers of the king, and attending not only to his foreign business but to important domestic concerns as well; or else that it contained some or most of the members of that committee. During the reign of Charles I it was the foreign committee much more than the privy council which, under the king, really directed and controlled the principal concerns of policy and state. According to the Grand Remonstrance in 1642, one cause of the misery and danger affecting the realm was management and transaction of great affairs "in private Cabinet Councils".[126]

It may be, however, also that the term "cabinet" or "junto" was at times applied to some group of confidential advisers not a committee of the council, or not regarded as such. There can be no doubt that either this was the case, or else outsiders who knew little about what was going on thought it so. In 1642, when cabinet councils were being condemned, parliament urged the king not to make use of "unknown or unsworn Counsellors".[127] Roger North, writing in the eighteenth century, seems to lend himself strongly to this explanation of the origin of the cabinet, and his opinion has been thought to carry great weight: " Thus the cabinet council, which at first was but in the nature of a private conversation, came to be a formal council and had the direction of most transactions of the Government, foreign and domestic." [128] But there is no reason to suppose that North, who was of course not a contemporary of the earlier part of the development of the cabinet council, had access to the knowledge on which understanding of it may be based now, or had made adequate research in the vast miscellany of records from which such knowledge is to be deduced. He did, indeed, have the papers of his brother, the lord keeper, Guilford, who was admitted into the cabinet of Charles II shortly after changes made in the privy council in 1679, but those papers contained no information that would be decisive as to this point, while North's own comments and interpretation seem to have been made many years later. It should be remembered, also, that when the lord keeper entered the cabinet the times were unusual. The period was one of attempted reform and of struggle between Charles II and a powerful opposing faction, so that for the moment " cabinet " may have been no more than a private group of those in whom Charles could confide. Elsewhere North's description is a mere generality, that can be interpreted either way: "As for his lordship's being taken into the cabinet, it was but a token of a more entire confidence in his fidelity and judgment; and that he might be assistant, not only in the formal proceedings of the privy council, but also in the most retired consultations of his majesty's government." [129]

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[124] *The Rota: or, a Model of a Free-State, or Equall Common-Wealth* (London, 1660), in S. P. D., Interregnum, ccxx. 57.

[125] *House of Lords MSS., H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 116.

[126] *Commons' Journals*, ii. 443, 444.

[127] *Lords' Journals*, iv. 690.

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[128] North, *Lives of the Norths,* i. 299.

[129] *Ibid.,* 235.

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE CABINET, 1660-1679

SHORTLY after Charles II began to reign in England he established a committee of foreign affairs, containing those of his council to whom he most gave his trust. Of the institution of such a committee of the council there is no record in the council register, and possibly at first it was not regarded as a formal council committee. More probably, however, the council record in this as in many other instances is not complete. Concerning the existence of the body there is no doubt whatever. In 1667 Clarendon defending himself from charges made against him declared to parliament that Charles on his return to England had appointed a " Committee for Foreign Affairs " and for consideration of such things as required secrecy, choosing therefor from his privy council certain ones who had during his exile been particularly trusted by him.[1] Elsewhere he relates that Charles brought with him from beyond the seas that council whose advice he had always received in matters of greatest importance. Continuing he says that the treasurer, Ormonde—the lord steward, the lord general, the two secretaries and himself " were of that secret committee . . . which, under the notion of foreign affairs ", was to deal with " all his affairs " before they came to " public debate "—the privy council.[2] Others were added, for the notes of the first meeting, 18 June 1660 made by Secretary Nicholas, record that those present were the lord chancellor, the marquis of Ormonde—lord steward, the duke of Albemarle—lord general, the earl of Southampton—lord treasurer, Lord Colepepper—master of the rolls, and the two secretaries of state—Sir Edward Nicholas and Sir William Morrice.[3] It would seem that contemporaries soon referred to this body as "cabinet" or "cabal".[4]

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[1] *Lords' Journals,* xii. 155.

[2] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* i. 269, 270, 315.

In 1660 Clarendon received news that his daughter Anne, secretly married to the duke of York, was in labor. This was brought to him when the king was at his house with the secret committee.[5] Clarendon declares that in 1665 William Coventry—secretary of the duke of York and a commissioner of the navy—was admitted to the privy council, "and quickly after, upon the like desire of the duke, he was called to that committee with which his majesty used to consult his most secret affairs."[6] Next year it was this committee which Charles consulted when troubled because a bill had been brought into parliament for the inspecting of public accounts.[7]

In 1665 Pepys wrote in his diary: "My heart and head to-night is full of the Victualling business, being overjoyed and proud at my success in my proposal about it, it being read before the King, Duke, and the Caball with complete applause and satisfaction".[8] In March 1666 a correspondent wrote that Charles II returning from Gravesend landed at Worcester House—the residence of Clarendon, where it is known that the foreign committee had so frequently met—"and stayed there at a Cabinet Council till past nine".[9] In August 1666, one Sunday,

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[3] S. P. D., Charles II, xxiii. 168; Ranke, *Englische Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1871), viii. 204.

[4] A modern commentator wrote: "A committee was appointed ostensibly for the consideration of foreign affairs, but which was in reality a cabinet council, wherein might be discussed every question, whether of foreign or internal policy, before it was submitted to the whole board." T. H. Lister, *Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon* (London, 1838), ii. 6.

[5] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* i. 332.

[6] *Ibid.,* ii. 190.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 320.

[8] *Diary,* 14 October 1665.

[9] Sir Paul Neile to Henry Slingesby, Whitehall, 17 March 1665-6: *Graham MSS., H.M.C.,* 6th report, appendix, p. 338.

Pepys and Sir William Penn went to Whitehall, where the king and "cabinet" were met in the Green Chamber. Pepys called in reported on the victuals of the fleet, and naval matters were discussed. Present were the duke of York—lord high admiral, the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, the two secretaries, Sir George Carteret and Sir William Coventry.[10] Each one of those mentioned is also recorded by Clarendon as present at meetings of the committee of foreign affairs. In January of the next year Pepys went "to my Lord Chancellor's, where the King and Cabinet met".[11] A little later he went "to my Lord Treasurer's, where the King, Duke of York, and the Caball, and much company without".[12] At this meeting, it was thought, were given instructions to the English representatives about to go to Breda.[13] Towards the end of the year Pepys heard that the cabal consisted of four members only.[14] His information was probably incorrect, or it may have related to influence or royal favor merely. It can scarcely be doubted that the secretaries of state attended—though he does not include them, and a few days later Pepys himself speaks of the duke of York being with the king in the "Caball".[15] Clarendon says that in 1667, when affairs were going badly, and parliament was not inclined to give any money, "the king in these straits called that council together with whom he used to consult his most secret affairs". The chief naval officers and the commissioners of the navy attended, and inquiry was made about the condition of the navy. This council met many days, morning and evening.[16] Elsewhere has been discussed the question of the identity of this committee or council with the committee of foreign affairs, which Clarendon frequently speaks of and at meetings of which Nicholas took his notes. All in all, the evidence while not entirely conclusive, supports strongly the presumption that what Pepys called the cabinet or cabal was what Nicholas called the foreign committee or what the lord treasurer Clarendon described as that secret committee in which under the notion of foreign affairs the king's principal business was dealt with before it came to consideration in the privy council.

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[10] *Diary*, 26 August 1666.

[11] *Ibid.*, 20 January 1666-7.

[12] *Ibid.*, 31 March 1667.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] "The Archbishop of Canterbury is called no more to the Cabal, nor, by the way, Sir W. Coventry; which I am sorry for, the Cabal at present being, as he says, the King, and Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Keeper, the Duke of Albemarle, and Privy Seale." *Ibid.*, 21 December 1667.

[15] *Ibid.*, 31 December 1667.

It may be added that while the terms "cabinet" and "cabal" were doubtless at times applied carelessly to different bodies or groups, it would appear that for the most part they came to be used by different persons or by the same one at different times to designate the same body of the king's select and principal councillors. Andrew Marvell in one of his poems asked where was the statue of Charles II: "is he in caball in his cabinett sett"?[17] But this is another instance where "cabinet" may mean either the place of meeting or the body that assembled. In 1674 the Venetian ambassador, who frequently mentions the cabinet council, wrote that Charles II perceived the animosity of the people against those who had suggested the war and the league, all of them being members of the so-called "Cabal Ministry, or close private union".[18] In 1692, during a debate in the commons concerning the cabinet, one of the speakers declared: "In intermissions of parliament, kings have consulted with their Privy-Councils; formerly they went not into lesser Cabals."[19]

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[16] Clarendon, *Life and Continuation,* ii. 365, 366.

[17] *Works,* i. p. ix.

[18] Despatch of Girolamo Alberti, 23 February 1674 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliv. 704.

[19] *Parliamentary History,* v. 724.

In February 1668, when several standing committees of the council were appointed, a committee of foreign affairs was formally established and listed in the register of the council. It consisted of nine members: [20]

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord high admiral | duke of York |
| joint admiral of the fleet | Prince Rupert |
| lord keeper | Sir Orlando Bridgeman |
| lord privy seal | Lord Robartes |
| gentleman of the king's bedchamber | duke of Buckingham |
| lord general | duke of Albemarle |
| lord steward | duke of Ormonde |
| secretary of state | earl of Arlington |
| secretary of state | Sir William Morrice |

Concerning the activities of this body there are in addition to much miscellaneous information, not only the minutes of the foreign committee, which were regularly kept at times, but also notes of meetings taken by Joseph Williamson, secretary to Arlington, who acted as secretary or clerk to the foreign committee. Shortly after the body was established a paper of notes was endorsed by Williamson: "Questions for the priuate Comittee".[21]

In June 1668 the duke of York, Prince Rupert, the lord privy seal, the duke of Buckingham, the duke of Ormonde, and secretary Morrice were "To attend his Ma$^{ty}$ at My Lord Keepers at Essex house Tuesday the 16$^{th}$ instant at four afternoone. And My Lord Keeper to haue notice giuen him of it." Williamson records in his journal a little later that "his Ma$^{ty}$ after Councell at Whitehall this morning passed then to Essex House upon a priuate Councell".[22] In December the duke of York, Prince Rupert, the lord privy seal, the duke of Buckingham, the duke of Albemarle, the duke of Ormonde, and Secretary Trevor—who had recently succeeded Morrice—were "To have notice to attend his Ma$^{ty}$ at the L. Arlington's lodgings at Whitehall tomorrow at nine aClocke in the morning." Lord Ashley—chancellor of the exchequer—and Sir William Coventry—a commissioner of the treasury—were also to be warned to attend.[23]

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[20] P. C. R., lx, 12 February 1667-8.

[21] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 13 March 1667-8.

[22] S. P. D., Charles II, ccxli, 15 June 1668; ccliii, 21 September 1668.

In February 1669, Pepys learned that the state of the accounts of the recent embassy of Lord Sandwich to Spain was less good than he thought, "for, though it be passed the King and his Cabal (the Committee for Foreign Affairs as they are called)", yet the accounts had been reduced, and the lords of the treasury might not allow the remainder.[24] Shortly after he relates that two with whom he conversed told him it was resolved "in the Cabal" that Lord Middleton should not go to Tangier. There was a meeting of the foreign committee that day, but the minutes have no notice of such business.[25] In April he says that by appointment the admiralty officials attended the king and cabal at Lord Arlington's office. Actually that very day the minutes of the committee of foreign affairs show a meeting at Whitehall to which navy officials were called and at which Pepys was present.[26] In August Williamson writes that the establishments of Ireland, both civil and military, were arranged at "a Cabinet Councell", so that now the lord lieutenant would soon depart. He speaks of another Sunday meeting, held a fortnight previously in the treasury about Irish business, as a meeting of the committee of foreign affairs.[27]

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[23] *Ibid.*, ccl, 9 December 1668.

[24] *Diary*, 8 February 1668-9.

[25] *Ibid.*, 21 March 1668-9; S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 21 March 1668-9.

[26] *Diary*, 4 April 1669; S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 4 April 1669.

[27] S. P. D., Charles II, cclxxi, 30 August 1669. "Yesterday was a meeting of the Foreigne Committee in the Treāry where tis s$^{d}$ all things und$^{r}$ consideration relateing to Ireland were determined, upon w$^{ch}$ tis s$^{d}$ the

In 1671 a Venetian report asserts that Charles II was used to discuss his principal affairs only with those whom he had most in his confidence.[28] In December of that year a friend wrote to Williamson that he had just learned he was not only clerk of the cabinet but of the common (privy) council as well.[29]

About the same time there was a meeting of the "Foreigne Comittee" attended by the king and nine:[30]

> Frnce.
>
> The King acquaints the Lords that the Fr. Amb^r^ came to him w^th^in these few dayes, & s^d^ he had seuerall matt^rs^ of weight to propose to him that the Dutch . . . were groune very sawcy & insolent to the King . . . he had something of consequence to offer.
>
> Thinkes it fitt to heare him. especially now that Holl^d^ is sending into Frnce, & that Dewitt lyes wait to speake w^th^ Purpose as he goes by.
>
> L. Arlington to p^r^pare a Comission . . . to extend to Co~~m~~merce as well as Allyance. & the Fr. Amb^r^ to be minded of the Treaty of Co~~m~~merce.

A month later Alberti, the Venetian ambassador wrote back to his government that "the English Cabinet" had been considering whether as Holland was more than ever disposed to make concessions to France, and as Spain

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L^d^ L^t^ will begin his journey this day seven-night." *Ibid.*, 16 August 1669. The minutes of such a meeting, where ten were present besides the king, appear in S. P., Ireland cccxxv, 15 August 1669.

[28] "Le materie gravi le consulta con quelli soli della piu intima confidenza": Piero Mocenigo, Relazione d'Inghilterra: Venetian Transcripts, cxi.

[29] "I am asured you are Clark of the Common Counsell as well as Cabinett w^ch^ I hartlie reioys at and hope in time you will be a Secretari": Sir Robert Carr to Joseph Williamson, 4 December 1671: S. P. D., Charles II, ccxciv. Williamson was appointed clerk of the privy council and knighted some weeks later: P. C. R., lxiii, 24 January 1671-2.

[30] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 10 December 1671.

was undecided about allying herself with the United Provinces, it would not be for the interest of England to change her compact with France to be neutral for an open offensive and defensive alliance with His Most Christian Majesty.[31]

In 1672 the committee of foreign affairs consisted apparently of [32]

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord high admiral | duke of York |
| admiral of the fleet | Prince Rupert |
| master of the horse | duke of Buckingham |
| secretary of state in Scotland | earl of Lauderdale |
| secretary of state | earl of Arlington |
| chancellor of the exchequer | Lord Ashley |
| lord treasurer | Lord Clifford |
| secretary of state | Henry Coventry |

In March a Dutch observer reported that management of the great affairs in England had just been considerably altered. All matters of importance were now being handled by the king and the duke of York with five others—Buckingham, Lauderdale, Arlington, Clifford, and Ashley. All the other lords of the council were excluded from the weightiest deliberations.[33] Afterwards it was stated in James II's memoirs that in 1672 the "Cabinet Councill" consisted of Buckingham, Lauderdale, Arlington, Clifford, and Ashley Cooper.[34] This group has often been known as the Cabal. It may be that with the lapse of a quarter of a century the author's recollection was no longer exact. More probably, however, he was recalling the "cabal" which had become fixed in men's memory through the coincidence of its letters with the initials of five members who formed a particular and inner group for a time. It would omit Coventry, the other secretary of state, who can scarcely be supposed not to have attended some meetings of the cabinet or cabal then. It also omitted the duke of York as well as Prince Rupert, but the names of princes of the blood were often left out of such lists, it being understood that they attended any councils or committees as a matter of course, whenever they desired. Evidently the prince was excluded at this time, however. In 1673 an anonymous author who was probably Sir William Coventry, wrote a pamphlet denouncing the private cabal at Whitehall. Coventry had formerly attended at the small group of principal advisers of the king, and was doubtless familiar enough with their doings. With reference to ministerial alterations of the year before, and inveighing against the cabal, he said: "they reformed their *Cabinet Counsel;* and turned at once out of the *Committee for Foreign Affairs, Prince Rupert,* the Duke of *Ormond,* the *Lord Keeper,* and the late *Secretary Trevor*".[35] He speaks of the cabal engrossing all business of importance, and concealing the principal resolutions and debates from his

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[31] Despatch of Girolamo Alberti, 29 January 1672 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xlii. 194.

[32] Note on the outside leaf of S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii. "Mr Treas̄" is given. This undoubtedly refers to Clifford, who was treasurer of the household but who became lord treasurer 28 November 1672.

[33] "Het maniement van de groote saecken heeft alhier een geheel andere swier gekregen als te voren, werdende alle saecken van importantie by den Coninch en Hertogh van Yorck, en daerenboven noch vijff andere Heeren, te weten, Buckingam, Ladderdale, Arlington, Cliston en Ashley verhandelt, daeronder ooch dan noch al sijn Heeren, voor dewelcke den inhoudt van het voorgenoemde tractaet wert gesecreteert, sulck dat alle de verdere Heeren van den Raedt uit de gewightighste deliberatien uit geslooten werden, als sijn de Heer Prins Robbert, Milord

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Keeper, Ormond, Anglesey, Hollis, Carlisle, Trevor, Aertsbischop van Kantelbergh en andere." Johan Boreel to the greffier of the states general, London, 22 March 1672 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 PPP, fo. 456.

[34] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* i. 454.

[35] *Englands Appeal from the Private Cabal at White-Hall to the Great Council of the Nation, etc.,* (London, 1673), p. 46.

majesty's privy council.[36] It may be that identification of the cabal of five with the cabinet cannot be considered exact for any considerable time, and in so far as the cabal of 1672 was in practice limited to five ministers, it must, perhaps, be considered as an interior meeting of the king's counsellors or favorites. In September of that year the treasurer wrote to the duke of Lauderdale: "the Caball are all impatient for Y$^r$ returne to us".[37] An undated libel of this or the next year speaks of "the Grand Cabball of seaven"; [33] as does another version or a variant about the same time, which may, however, refer to either an earlier or a later situation, since among the six specified were Ormonde besides Buckingham, Lauderdale, Arlington, Ashley Cooper, and Clifford.[39]

"Scarcely", said the Venetian ambassador in a report in November," had the King returned to London at the close of last week when he held several cabinet-councils owing to the repeated advices of the advanced movements of the Imperialists." According to the old style of reckoning then used in England he refers, probably, to 19 October. The register of the committee of foreign affairs records meetings at Whitehall 2, 20, 27 October.[40] In February 1673 Alberti says that Arlington told him "a cabinet-council" was to be held that evening. By the old-style calendar that was 24 January. For that date the register of the foreign committee records a meeting at Whitehall: present, the king, the duke of York, Prince Rupert, lord chancellor, lord treasurer, Arlington.[41] In June one of Williamson's correspondents wrote to him that after a cabinet council the duke of York had resigned his several places and commands.[42] At the same time his clerk informed him that the lord treasurer was about to resign and that "att a private Comittee" his successor or successors would be named.[43] A little later he was told that the duke of Ormonde was called again to "the Cabinett Councell". "In my last", says the writer, "I acquainted y^r^ Ex^cy^ that his Royall Highnesse had laid downe his seuerall Commissions; and am now to tell y^r^ Ex^cy^ that the place of High Admirall of England is to be managed by Comm^rs^ which are all the Lords of the Cabinett Councell".[44] Another informant wrote that since the resignation of the duke from the admiralty the king had appointed as commissioners[45]

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[37] Clifford to Lauderdale, Whitehall, 7 September 1672: *Lauderdale Papers*, ii (Camden Society, new series, xxxvi), pp. 228, 229.

[38] "The Christmass Gamball or a Dream of the Grand Cabball": S. P. D., Charles II, cccxix. 159.

[39] "The Dreame of the Caball": *ibid.*, cccxxxvii, September 1673. The author says:

> Me thought there mett the grand Caball of 7
> odd Numbers as some say doo best please heav'n
> when sate they were and Doores were all fast shutt,
> I secrett was behind the hangings putt,
> where here and see I could but he that there
> had plac'd me bid me haue as great a care
> of stirring as my life, and ere that out
> from thence I came, resolued should be my Doubt
> what would become of this madd world vnlesse
> p$^r$sent designes were cross'd with ill success.

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[40] Despatch of Alberti, 4 November 1672 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliii. 407; S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii.

[41] Despatch of 3 February 1673: Venetian Transcripts, xliii. 456; S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 24 January 1672-3.

[42] Robert Yard to Sir Joseph Williamson, Whitehall, 16 June 1673: S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part i.

[43] Henry Ball to Williamson, Whitehall, 16 June 1673: *ibid.*

[44] Yard to Williamson, 20 June 1673: *ibid.*

[45] William Bridgeman to Williamson, 23 June 1673: S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part i.

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord chancellor | earl of Shaftesbury |
| lord treasurer | Viscount Latimer |
| lord privy seal | earl of Anglesey |
| captain of the horse guards | duke of Monmouth |
| secretary of state in Scotland | duke of Lauderdale |
| lieutenant general | duke of Buckingham |
| lord steward | duke of Ormonde |
| secretary of state | earl of Arlington |
| vice-treasurer of Ireland | Sir George Carteret |
| secretary of state | Henry Coventry |

"My L$^d$ Ormond is lately brought into the cabinet againe", a certain one wrote.[46] One of Williamson's correspondents said: "The Duke of Ormond is now of the Cabinet".[47] Another: "They discourse in the town of more changes, but all I can assure you of is onely that my Lord Duke of Ormond does again come to the Comittee of Forreigne Affaires, by which you may guesse att more." [48] A third: "The People are extreamely pleased to see the duke of Ormond called into the Cabinett Councell againe, for to speak their words, he is a good Protestant and English man." [49] From Brussels the earl of Castlehaven wrote to Ormonde: "I hear that you are advanced from the gallery to the cabinet".[50]

In July 1673 outsiders believed that the cabinet or cabal was rent with dissensions, and falling to pieces. "This morning was a Meeting of the Cabinett, though the Towne report it to be quite broken, and a new one forming, and its now very hott, but pretended a secrett, th$^{t}$ Wee shall haue suddainly a new Lord Treasurer again ", wrote Williamson's clerk.[51] A few days later: " the Rumour of the Caball being broken continues, and S$^{r}$ W$^{m}$ Coventry to be Treasurer ".[52] A few weeks later he said: " Whither it's my Lord Treasurer's illness or noe that causes so few meetings of the Lords, ore that the Cabinett is really broken into peices, the Town doe not well agree in, but all observe that of late wee have very few meetings ".[53] Shortly after " My Lord Arlington has removed the meeting of the Caball to his own Lodgings where indeed it has been this fortnight ": [54] that is to say, in the office of the secretary of state, in Whitehall, where so many of the meetings of the committee of foreign affairs were held.[55] In September he wrote: " My Lord Chancellor has been these two dayes somewhat indisposed w$^{th}$ the Goute, But hopes to Come to the Cabinett to morrow." [56]

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[46] Sir Charles Lyttelton to Viscount Hatton, London, 24 June 1673: *Hatton Correspondence,* i (Camden Society, new series, xxii), p. 107.

[47] J. Rosse to Williamson, 21 June 1673: *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson* (Camden Society, new series, viii), p. 58.

[48] William Bridgeman to Williamson, 23 June 1673: *ibid.,* p. 59.

[49] Yard to Williamson, 23 June 1673: S.P.D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part i.

[50] Letter of 4 July 1673: *Cholmondeley MSS., H.M.C.,* 5th report, appendix, p. 357.

In October, when parliament was about to meet, it was predicted that Buckingham would be called to account; " but now they say, that to saue himselfe, he will discouer great matters, and all that has passed in the Cabinet ".[57]

A Dutch pamphlet of this same year refers to the secret cabal at the English court as all powerful in foreign affairs.[58]

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[51] Ball to Williamson, Whitehall, 11 July 1673: S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part i.

[52] Ball to Williamson, 14 July 1673: *ibid.*

[53] Letter of 8 August 1673: *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson,* p. 151.

[54] Ball to Williamson, 25 August 1673: S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part ii.

[55] For example, S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii, 6 March 1671-2.

[56] Ball to Williamson, 19 September 1673: S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvii.

[57] Yard to Williamson, Whitehall, 3 October 1673: *ibid.*

In 1674 there was a debate in the commons in which the cabal was attacked, and inquiry made as to its nature. Lord St. John said he would have it investigated whether any in "the private Cabal" had advised against the house of commons, to force the commons to pass bills, and if any of the members refused to take off their heads.[59]

*Secretary Coventry*: Lord *St. John* said, "one of the CABAL told him, *&c.*"—Would know what the meaning of the CABAL is.

*Mr. Garroway*: That is so great a mystery, that he would know it above all things.

*Secretary Coventry*: We do things, not voluntarily, but by Law; the King's Privy Counsellors! and it is perjury for us to reveal—As for the committee of foreign affairs (of which he is the only man of this House) wishes (he protests to God) that you knew what opinion he has ever given of affairs.[60]

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[58] *Een Klaer Vertoogh der Raets-plegingen van het Hof van Engelandt, Gedruckt door publique Authoriteyt in den jare 1668. Waer in hare Resolutien, om Spangien en de Spaense Nederlanden te onderstutten tegen de opswellende grootheyt der Franse Monarchie klaerlijck worden ontdeckt, en met seer gewichtige Redenen bekrachtight, by maniere van een onderling Dispuyt. Waer uyt gesien kan worden, hoe dat de gedaente van dat Hof, sedert dien tijdt, nu in desen Oorlogh verandert is, door het stercke vermogen van de Secrete Cabale aldaer,* etc. (Amsterdam, 1673).

[59] Grey, *Debates*, ii. 256, 257.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

"CABAL", declared Mr. Powle, "is a new word, and what is said there is not said in Council". Another asserted that cabal and council were different, but that the commons had power over both.[61] In a speech two days later Garroway declared: [64]

> The Question is, whether a CABAL of seven, four, or five men, shall take all business into their hands, in such a conjuncture, to advise war, to the hazard of Religion, Laws, and all, and the King too; and so many honourable persons about him not employed . . . Says not but things may be privately discoursed preparatorily, but the King is construed to act in *Council*, not in CABAL—

That year, according to Sir William Temple, the "private junts" having determined to send an embassy to the Dutch, the terms of peace to be demanded were settled at the "foreign committee." [63]

In 1675 a correspondent wrote that on the preceding Friday "*at the Cabinet Councill*" there was great dispute about whether money should be asked for during the current session of parliament; that the treasurer and keeper were for it, Lauderdale and Coventry against it, and that the debate grew warm.[64] Not long after he said that with respect to some business of the lord lieutenant of Ireland the king presided at a committee of foreign affairs, which the writer also called "the Councill," attended by the duke, the lord keeper, the lord treasurer, Lauderdale, and the two secretaries—Coventry and Williamson.[65] Next year a doggerel libel described the king at cabal and at council:[66]

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[61] Grey, Debates, ii. 256, 257.

[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 283.

[63] *Memoirs,* ii. 252, 254.

[64] William Harbord to the earl of Essex, 22 May 1675: *Essex Papers, 1675-1677* (Camden Society, third series, xxiv), p. 20.

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31.

In all affaires of Church & State
He very zelous is and able,
Devoute at prayers and sitts up late
Att the Caball and Counsell Table

In July Sir Robert Southwell told the earl of Essex that some of the bishops had lately met with the cabinet council upon religious matters; it was thought there would be severity against Catholics and more indulgence for Protestant dissenters.[67] "I heare our carrying the vote for the naming Holland to bee an Allie", wrote a certain one in 1677, "much displeased the Court, at the Cabinett the D. moved to have us dissolved, others prorogued, but the more moderate Councills prevailed".[68]

One of the usual, almost regular times of meeting of the committee of foreign affairs was on Sunday. During this period there are many allusions to the cabinet assembling on that day. In November 1677 Southwell wrote to the duke of Ormonde that the attorney had attended the king "on Sunday, before the Cabinet sat".[69] "From Sunday last", he wrote in the following January, "until this Saturday morning the Cabinet Council has in a manner been constantly sitting".[70] "The order for the Lords' Robes issued on Sunday night an hour after the Cabinet rose, there being nothing there transacted of it", Southwell wrote somewhat later.[71]

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[66] "The Chronicle," in S. P. D., Charles II, ccclxxxi, 3 May 1676.

[67] Letter of 4 July 1676: *Essex Papers,* p. 62.

[68] Thomas Thynne to the earl of Halifax, 27 May 1677: Foxcroft, *Life of Halifax,* i. 129.

[69] Letter of 27 November 1677: *H. M. C., Ormonde MSS.,* new series, iv. 387.

[70] Letter of 12 January 1677-8: *ibid.,* p. 393. The scanty record of the committee of foreign affairs has minutes of meetings 6 and 10 January 1677-8: S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxx.

[71] Letter to Ormonde, 31 December 1678: *Ormonde MSS.,* new series, iv. 494.

Numerous allusions to cabinet or cabal when assembled in connection with other allusions to the committee of foreign affairs confirm the impression that the various designations were being applied to the same body. In October 1677 a correspondent wrote: "Last Sunday his Ma$^{ty}$ declared to the cabinet counsel th$^{t}$ the match betwixt Lady Mary and the Prince of Orange wase concluded on, and the Privy Counsell wase summoned yesterday morning, and ther his Ma$^{ty}$ did publickly acquaint the L$^{ds}$ therew$^{th}$ ".[72] Concerning the project of marrying the Prince of Orange and the Princess Mary, Sir William Temple, who was so well acquainted with diplomacy and affairs of state at this time, wrote: "Thus far what had passed went no farther than the King, the Duke, the Prince, my Lord Treasurer, and me; but that afternoon it was declared at the foreign committee, and next day at council ".[73] During 1678 among the notes of Williamson, who had become secretary of state, and who had previously been very well informed about all that concerned the committee of foreign affairs, are various memoranda about Van Beuningen, the Dutch ambassador, who was at the moment carrying on a negotiation with the English government. Sometimes he speaks of him as coming to the foreign committee, sometimes to the cabinet council.[74] It might be said that he was here deliberately marking a distinction by making use of two several terms. With respect to the evidence in this instance alone, it would be quite possible that such was the case. It is equallly possible, however, that he was using with careless indifference two terms each of which was customarily applied at will to designate the same thing; and, taken in connection with the great amount of other evidence upon the matter, that would seem almost certainly to be so.

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[72] Charles Hatton to Viscount Hatton, 23 October 1677: *Hatton Correspondence,* i. (Camden Society, new series, xxii), p. 151.

[73] Sir William Temple to Sir John Temple, November 1677: *Works,* iv. 337.

[74] State Papers, Miscellaneous, ccxv, 21 January 1677-8, 8 April 1678.

Thus also with others. In his diary Danby records a meeting on Sunday at the end of March: "Dutch Amb$^{r}$ spoken with by the K for a new Concert of Fleets in the Mediterranean. &$^{a}$ in the for: Committee".[75] Monday a week later he says: "Van B. presented himselfe at a Cabinet Councell, promised to write the next day home to the seuerall points depending".[76] About this time a correspondent of the duke of Lauderdale wrote: "I uent emediately to ueat on the King, he uas the nat the Cabinit Councill".[77] A few days after he reports that the king "uent auay to the Commity of forrange affaers".[78] In April 1678 Sir Joseph Williamson wrote to Sir Leoline Jenkins concerning two letters just received from him: "They have beene both Com̄unicated to his Ma$^{ty}$ in the Cabinet Councell this evening".[79] Shortly after, writing to him about two other letters, he said: "they have beene both read before his Ma$^{ty}$ at the fforreigne Committee who extreamely approves of yo$^{r}$ Conduct".[80]

In March 1678 Southwell wrote that the earl of Essex—who had been lord lieutenant of Ireland until the preceding August—was no longer summoned "to the Cabinet".[81] Essex was a member of the foreign committee at this time. Unfortunately the scattered papers and memoranda, which constitute then its principal known record, often lack information about attendance at meetings. A few weeks later, however, he was certainly among those who came.[82] In September the cabinet is described, apparently, as a close committee of the council.[83] Shortly after Danby wrote to Temple that the chief aim of parliament seemed to be against the duke, but was attended with designs against lesser ones, " as myselfe and others of the Cabinett ".[84] When Oates informed Charles that the queen had plotted to poison him, the king carried the evidence presented to the cabinet council, where it was received with greatest indignation.[85] About that time the earl of Ossory informed Ormonde that he had assurance that the duke, the chancellor, and Monmouth would bring the question of expelling Roman Catholics from the army to consideration at the cabinet council.[86]

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[75] Diary of the first duke of Leeds: Add. MS. 28040, 31 March 1678.

[76] *Ibid.*, 8 April 1678.

[77] Earl of Murray to the duke of Lauderdale, Whitehall, 20 April 1678: *Lauderdale Papers*, iii (Camden Society, xxxviii), p. 116.

[78] Letter of 25 April 1678: *ibid.*, p. 120.

[79] Letter from Whitehall, 12 April 1678: Western MS. 35376, fo. 67.

[80] Letter of 21 May 1678: *ibid.*, fo. 72.

[81] Letter to the duke of Ormonde, 2 March 1677-8: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 411.

In December 1678 the cabinet was again discussed in the house of commons.[87] Charles had rejected a militia bill.

> *Mr. Williams*: If *Coventry* will aver, that the Advice of the King's rejecting the Bill for the Militia was given by the Privy Council, he says something. But Gentlemen put it particularly upon the Advice of particular men, and not the Privy Council; that they have swayed the King against the Advice of Paliament. I know no such Council, nor Law of *England.* I know none as a Council for foreign Affairs. It is not known in Law . . .

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[82] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxx, 9, 11, 20, 30 April, 3, 15 May 1678.

[83] " This day a Cabinet and Close Committee of the Council sat both before noon and after noon upon information of a Jesuitical plot contrived and hatched in Ireland." Lord Chancellor Boyle to the duke of Ormonde, 28 September 1678: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 208.

[84] Letter of 19 November 1678: Add. MS. 28054, fo. 196.

[85] Southwell to the duke of Ormonde, 26 November 1678: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 480.

[86] Letter of 28 November 1678: *ibid.*, p. 247.

[87] Grey, *Debates,* vi. 313.

*Mr. Powle*: A Cabinet Council, that takes things out of the hands of the Privy Council, is the complaint. Not many days since I asked, "Whether the matter of not disbanding the Army, when a Law had passed for it, was brought to the Privy Council?" I was answered, "No."

The commons voted an address to Charles on the ill state of the nation and of dangers because he had followed private councils rather than those of parliament. "My Lord Treasurer", says Reresby in his journal, "was struck at, and some others of the Cabinet Council, by this address".[88] Roger North writing afterwards of events of this time said: "They went so far as to vote out of the King's Council five or six of the chief; who were then called the *Cabinet*, by Name, without any Charge against them".[89] On the dissolution of parliament early in 1679 a diarist wrote: "I supposed the Cabal doth it to gaine time & to bring on the French assistance".[90]

In April 1679 Charles II made his principal effort to appease the opposition. A correspondent wrote to Ormonde that the earl of Essex was now of the cabinet council.[91] A fortnight later the king, having dissolved his privy council, made declaration about a new one. As is well known, he declared that since there had been opposition to the use of a committee of foreign affairs, he would not in future make use of such a body.[92] For that reason indeed the new privy council was to be limited in number and smaller in size. At once the French ambassador reported: "the cabinet council will be completely abolished".[93] Upon the king's declaration Algernon Sydney made comment: "he was pleased to add, That he would have no *first* or *principal Minister*, no Committee of Foreign affairs, or Cabinet Council".[94] A little later, when parliament had been prorogued without asking the advice of the council, the same correspondent wrote: "some wonder that his Majesty in constituting the Privy Council, having promised that he would have no cabinet Council", should so proceed.[95] When

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[88] *The Memoirs of Sir John Reresby* (London, 1875), pp. 152, 153.

[89] *Examen* (London, 1740), p. 569.

[90] *Diary of the Rev. Ralph Josselin* (Camden Society, third series, xv), p. 175.

[91] Henry Coventry to Ormonde, 8 April 1679: *Ormonde MSS.*, new series, v. 39.

[92] Charles asserted that the advice of the privy council might have been taken more frequently in the past, "if the great Number of this Councill, had not made it unfit for the Secrecy & dispatch that are

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necessary in many great Affaires. This forced Him to use a smaller Number of You in a forreigne Comittee, and sometimes the Advices of some few among them, (upon such occations) for many yeares past. Hee is sorry for the ill success he has found in this Course, and sensible of the ill posture of affaires from that, and, some unhappy accidents wch have raised great jealosyes & dissatisfaction among His Good Subjects." He hoped for wise and steady counsels in the future. "To this End Hee hath resolved to lay aside the use he may have hitherto made of any single Ministry, or private Advices, or forreigne Comittees for the Generall Direction of His Affaires." P. C. R., lxviii, 21 April 1679.

[93] "Le conseil doit prendre connoissance de touttes les affaires du dedans et de celles du dehors, il ne s'en tiendra point d'autre, et ce qui s'appelloit le conseil du cabinet sera entierement aboly." Barillon to Louis XIV, 1 May 1679 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris (Baschet), xl. The next day the Dutch ambassador wrote back that Charles had announced his intention of no longer having any cabinet council or consulting commissioners for foreign affairs apart: "Dat Syn Majesteijt voortaen, sonder cabinet raet te houden offte commissarissen tot buijtenlandsche saecken affsonderlijck te consulteren, goetgevonden had op nieuws te formeren een raet bestaende uyt dertigh Heeren." Van Beuningen to the states general, Westminster, 2 May 1679 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 EE, fo. 107. Van Beuningen's account might indicate that the king had promised to have neither one nor the other in the future, and like some other contemporary expressions—point to a distinction rather than identity with respect to cabinet and committee of foreign affairs. Here, as in other cases, doubtful meanings have to be taken in connection with the weight of evidence from the mass of the pertinent data.

[94] Letter to Henry Savile, 21 April/1 May 1679: *Letters* (London, 1742), p. 32.

[95] Letter of 2/12 June 1679: *Letters*, p. 78.

parliament presently was dissolved he said that this was not thought well to agree "with what his Majesty was pleased to declare when he made the new Council, to have no Cabinet Council".[96]

Elsewhere it has been explained that despite his promise to have no more a committee of foreign affairs, Charles immediately constituted as a standing committee of the privy council a committee of intelligence, for preliminary consideration of important council business, especially foreign affairs. That committee, though less powerful and less obnoxious than the committee of foreign affairs had been in the period preceding, was in all except name a new foreign committee. Shortly after also the obnoxious term cabinet was again applied to the principal councillors of the king. For this particular time the history of cabinet and council committee is obscure. There is no lack of information, but the testimony is difficult to interpret. The problem concerns especially the nature of the cabinet during 1679 and for a short time afterward: whether it was for a brief while an informal group of the confidants of the king, or whether it was, as generally it had been before, the committee of the privy council for foreign affairs.

Afterwards Roger North wrote concerning this time, that "the Cabinet Council . . . consisted of those few great officers and courtiers whom the king relied upon for the interior dispatch of his affairs".[97] It may be that soon after Charles reformed his privy council the committee of intelligence was not what men began to call the cabinet council. On the other hand, in February 1680 Sir Robert Southwell wrote to the duke of Ormonde: "It was agreed at the Cabinet to-day that I should go in quality of Envoy Extraordinary to the Elector of Brandenburg. Thus much I hear without doors."[98] The register of the committee of the intelligence shows no meeting of that body on that day. There had, however, been a meeting of the committee two days previously, the king and seven councillors present. After other things noted in the record is "Mem: His Ma$^{ty}$ declared he intended to send S$^{r}$ Rob. Southwell in quality of Envoye Ex$^{ry}$ to the Elector of Brandenburgh, & directed dispatches should bee prepared for him accordingly".[99] It is more probable that Southwell spoke inexactly or had his information belated than that this matter was thus decided in two different bodies. Already, however, the term committee of foreign affairs had appeared again, and along with it, and presently superseding it, the term "the committee". At the same time the term cabinet was used more frequently than ever before, and after a while displaced the others altogether.

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[96] Letter of 16 July 1679: *ibid.*, p. 135.

[97] *Lives of the Norths*, i. 298, 299.

In connection with cabinet and "the committee" or "the lords of the committee" arise some of the most baffling problems that confront the student of conciliar development in England. It is proposed to examine the problem, and to explore the proposition that the committee of foreign affairs of the privy council was shortly after 1679 informally revived through the committee of intelligence, altered in membership, becoming in name what it had been in all but name—the foreign committee, that this foreign committee, ever more powerful and important, was presently best known as "the committee", and that it was "the committee" which men spoke of when they meant what at other times or sometimes under other circumstances they designated as the cabinet council.

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[98] Letter of 17 February 1679-80: *Ormonde MSS.*, iv. 580.
[99] Add. MS. 15643, fo. 29.

# CHAPTER XIV

## CABINET AND "THE COMMITTEE"

IN THE time of Charles I the "cabinet council" or the "junto" was for the most part almost certainly his committee of foreign affairs, which at one time acted as the Scottish Committee, and which was by some called committee of state. After 1660 a committee of foreign affairs soon re-appeared, and this it was that men spoke of as the cabinet council, calling it also "cabal". In 1679 Charles II promised to have no small groups or committees of foreign affairs; none the less, shortly after reconstituting his privy council a committee of intelligence was established, and not long after contemporaries were speaking of the foreign committee and of "the committee", while others spoke of the cabinet council. During the reign of James II there are few notices of the committee of foreign affairs or of "the committee", though there is much about the cabinet. After 1688, however, there is much again about a committee of the council whose members are styled "lords of the committee", which seems to be what the committee of foreign affairs had formerly been. During this time mention of the cabinet continues to recur. What the relations were between cabinet and the bodies called by these various names during this time is the subject of the enquiry ensuing.

As it was the committee of foreign affairs which men called the cabinet before 1679, so for the most part it was afterwards. For a time the term "cabinet" seems to have been avoided generally by those who had official connection with the government, while committee of intelligence was employed for what had formerly—with greater powers—been the committee of foreign affairs. Others, however, began to use the old terms almost at once. Shortly after the council had been reformed and the committee of intelligence constituted, Henry Savile wrote from Paris to Viscount Halifax that all the news he had he sent to the two secretaries, " and you, being of that thing which was once called the Cabinet Councell, have the perusal of all that comes to them ".[1] Halifax was one of the members of the committee of intelligence. A few days later Savile writing again, said " as you are of the Committee of Intelligence, you have the perusal of all the letters I write to Mr. Secretary ".[2] Three years later one of the correspondents of Lord Preston, the English ambassador in Paris, informed him that " the Earl of Sunderland is readmitted to the Committee of Foreign Affairs ".[3] The very next day Van Beuningen, the Dutch ambassador wrote to the states general that Sunderland had been readmitted to the cabinet council.[4]

Thus it would seem that after the reform of the council as before, the cabinet was for the most part the committee of foreign affairs.[5] One difficulty arises, however.

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[1] Letter of 27 May 1679: *Savile Correspondence* (Camden Society, lxxi), p. 91.

[2] Letter of 5 June 1679: *ibid.*, p. 92.

[3] O. Wynne to Lord Preston, Whitehall, 2 November 1682: *Graham MSS., H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 360.

[4] " Daer entegens is den Heer Grave van Sunderlandt geadmitteert in de soo geseijde cabinet raet ende comt dies over de deliberatien omtrent de uytheemsche saecken." Letter from Westminster, 3/13 November 1682: Add. MS. 17677 FF, fo. 351.

[5] Identity of cabinet and committee of foreign affairs during the years that followed the reform of the privy council was stated in an article by Godfrey Davies, " Council and Cabinet, 1679-88 ": *English Historical Review*, xxxvii. 47-66 (January 1922), in which, however, paucity of research in the indispensable manuscript sources has made possible an artificial clarity of statement, and allowed the author to remain in complete ignorance, apparently, of the problem of " the committee ".

Lord Guilford, who had been made lord keeper of the great seal in December 1682, who was admitted to the small group of principal councillors, and who died in 1685, writing his reminiscences of this time, says that "he was summoned to the Cabinett".[6] Roger North writing in the earlier part of the eighteenth century the original draft of the *Life of the Right Honorable Francis North, the Lord Keeper Guilford,* explicitly mentions his brother as being a member of the cabinet in the period after the reform of the privy council. He says, however: [7]

> His lops allwaie declined giving any opinion in that branch of royall oeconomy called forrein affairs; He could not avoid being in the way of the ordinary deliberations of that kind, by reason of his attendance on the usual Councells; And altho He was for the most part at the committees of the privy Councell, as for trade & plantations, all, w^ch^ might be called English business, he never cared to attend at the Committee for forrein affaires. He professed himself, for want of a fit education & study, incompetent to judg at all of those Matters.

Here is an assertion not to be explained away entirely. If the apparent meaning of North's statement be correct, there was, at this time certainly, a distinction between cabinet and committee of foreign affairs. Nor, if this be an error is it an error that can be thought to have arisen from North's well known partisanship and strong feeling. It may be that he was not fully cognizant of the details of governmental organization then, or that some of his recollections were dimmed through process of time. It is also possible that his expression is intended to signify that Guilford did not care to go to meetings of

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[6] "Memoranda Historica": Add. MS. 32520, fo. 251.

[7] Add. MS. 32507, fo. 164.

"the Committee" when "forrein affaires", principally, were the business to be dealt with. Against his statement must certainly be put the specific assertions of well-informed contemporaries also writing then. Yet, it may well be that there was some difference of nomenclature with different ones who wrote after 1679, and some uncertainty and confusion. It is well known that in the perplexity and confusion of political affairs for a while after Charles yielded to the power of Shaftesbury and his associates, the king did not give his confidence to the committee of intelligence as formerly he had to his committee of foreign affairs. Sir William Temple afterward related that there were smaller groups who were the king's intimate councillors for the more important matters.[8] Possibly, though one cannot be certain, some contemporaries thought of these groups as cabinet councils and made a distinction between cabinet and committee of foreign affairs.

The matter is the more difficult to decide because of the scantiness of information for the last years of Charles II and for all the reign of James II. Much may hereafter be found, but probably much that took place was not put in written record or else the record was carefully destroyed. The state papers domestic, so abundant for the period of Charles I and of Charles II are very scanty for the years of James II, while for that time the letter books of the secretaries are very deficient, and they have slight information with respect to this particular problem for the last year or so of his brother. To a considerable extent reliance must be put upon the accounts of foreign ambassadors, and these, helpful though they are, and rich in allusions to the cabinet, do not of themselves afford the information requisite for deciding such technical questions as distinction or identity in respect of cabinet and committee. In September 1683 one of the secretaries of state wrote to Lord Preston: "The lords that used to meet here at my Office sate so late this night, that I have just time to thanke Y$^{r}$ Lōp for Y$^{r}$ Lr̄e of the 24th from Fountainebleau". Somewhat later the secretary informed him that "His Maj$^{tie}$ after his wonted manner read over your Lōdps lr̄e of the 27th before it was produced before the Com$^{tee}$". In the draft in the letter book "Councill" was written and struck out before writing "Com$^{tee}$".[9] For some time afterwards there is little or no information of this sort. In the time of James II the committee of foreign affairs nearly seems to disappear, so far as contemporary accounts are concerned. There is almost no mention of foreign committee, or "the committee" or the lords of the committee of council in the entry books of the secretaries, in the miscellaneous state papers, in contemporary correspondence, or in ambassadors' reports. This may, to be sure, signify little, for it is often fortuitous enough when certain evidence exists or fails for a particular time. Yet the comparative dearth of allusions for some years cannot fail to be striking. About 1687 a French report on England gave an account of the privy council, of the cabinet council, and of a smaller, more secret council of the king. Besides those councils, said the writer, there was the commission for the affairs of Ireland.[10] Writing of that same time some years later, perhaps about 1700, James II, or he who wrote this part of the account of James's life, related that Sunderland took all important business from the cabinet into a small secret committee which he dominated. As to the cabinet, said the writer, "few matters of moment being treated of there, but the reading forreign letters ".[11] Yet occasional allusions make it certain that the committee of foreign affairs was well recognized in the time of James II as in the later years of his brother, and after the Revolution, there were those who recalled that there had been during these years a committee of foreign affairs which they spoke of as they spoke of the cabinet council.

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[8] Temple, *Memoirs, Works,* ii. 513, 514.

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[9] Jenkins to Lord Preston, 20 September, 22 November 1683: S. P. F. E. B., cxciii.

[10] "Outre ces Conseils, il y a une commission pour les affaires d'Irlande que les Anglois appellent *comitté*." Transcripts from Paris, clxxiv. 139.

After the Revolution of 1688 there continues to be abundant information about the cabinet council at the same time that there is again constant allusion to the lords of the committee—the small body of the king's principal councillors, who constituted the committee of council in which the important business of the kingdom was settled. It may be that herein there is no abrupt change, that much information about the committee survives for the years following the flight of James II while similar information for preceding years is now gone. Probably there was no large alteration. At all events during the period of William and afterwards during that of Anne, the principal administrative and conciliar work in the kingdom was carried on in the committee of council according to some, in the cabinet council according to others. To the investigator who patiently collects the data relating to these bodies it shortly becomes evident that the two of them were composed of the same members, and that the two terms were generally used to designate one and the same governmental organ.

Yet the subject is difficult and perplexing. In the mass of material which he examines the investigator perceives some instances which seem to indicate a difference between the committee of council and the cabinet, while in many other cases the body of councillors in question is

[11] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* ii. 99.

not named in the source, so that neither identity nor difference can be established.

For May 1682 Daniel, Lord Finch—first lord of the admiralty—drew up " A memoriall of the proceedings touching the Peace with Algiers ". 4 May, he says, " In the afternoon the cabinett council mett and we waited more then two houres before we were cald in, and when admitted the King told us of the peace, with which he was well pleas'd ". 10 May " we attended the King and Councill at Hampton Court ", where Charles ordered no hostilities against Sallee and that the treaty be ratified with the old form of passes for ships, about which there had been dispute. At this point, however, is written the marginal annotation: " But on Tuesday, May 22, Hampton Court, the peace was ordered to be ratified with Herbert's passe onely (Secretary Jenkins saying at the Committee of Councill on Monday, May 21, that he was so ordered by the Cabinet to prepare it)".[12] In 1690 Mary writing to William about some business at a meeting of the ministers whom she had in her diary spoken of as her " Cabinet Council " refers to them as " the committee ", in such fashion as to create strong presumption that she thought of the two terms as equally applicable to the same body. She then continues: " As I was going to the cabinet council in the morning, sir Wm. Lockhart came with a letter from the committee there ".[13] In these, as in other cases, the student cannot be certain whether distinction is intended through use of two different terms, or whether identity is established through indiscriminate use of either one term or the other in respect of the same thing. Constantly the student recalls instances in which no uncertainty can possibly exist. In 1691 a certain one wrote: " there was a Committe of Irish affaires a Saturday, a Cabinett Councell yesterday, and another Committe today", with evident distinction between cabinet and an ordinary committee of the privy council.[14]

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[12] *H. M. C., Finch MSS.*, ii. 171, 173.

[13] Mary to William, 28 June/8 July 1690: Dalrymple, ii, part iii. 124.

In 1702 Secretary Vernon wrote to the lord high admiral: "The Committee of the Lords of the Councill haue Appointed to meet at this Office to morrow at ten in the morning, and desire Your Lordp will be with them".[15] The next day he wrote to the duke of Ormonde: "The queen desires to speak with Your Grace at the Cabinet Councill, which is appointed to meet this Evening at six of the Clock at st James's, in relation to the Expedition intended by the Land Forces that are to be put on board the Fleet".[16]

In 1705 on a Thursday Secretary Hedges wrote to the attorney general:

> I have received both Your Letters of yesterday. The opinion of the Judges does not answer the Question proposed, and therefore I have sent notice to them to attend Her Majesty in Councill at Six a Clock this evening at St James's, and Her Majesty would have You attend on the Prince's Side at Five this afternoon, Your Letter with the Judges Opinion being to be laid before Her Majesty at that time when the Lords of the Committee of Councill will be present.

On Saturday he wrote another letter to the attorney:[17]

> Since I saw You this morning, I have recollected that the Judges were directed by the Queen to attend with their Opinions to morrow night at the Cabinet, which will be at Six a Clock, so that I need not summon

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[14] Viscount Sydney to the earl of Nottingham, 17 February 1690-1: S. P. Ireland, cccliii. 30.

[15] Letter of 31 March 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ccvi-ccvii. 26.

[16] Letter of 1 April 1702: *ibid.*

[17] Hedges to the attorney general, Whitehall, 22, 24 February 1704-5: *ibid.*, cv, 196, 197.

> them again. I believe it is expected that You should be present as You was last Thursday.

Next year Hedges wrote that since there was not "a sufficient number of Lords to make a Committee", he would not trouble the prince's council to attend any longer, but would ask them to come prepared to "the Cabinet" at St. James's the next night, and then tell her majesty what they thought best to be done further concerning the West India squadron.[18]

In 1711 St. John wrote to the earl of Strafford: "The Committee of Council not sitting till to-morrow night, nor the Cabinet till Monday, I can have at present materials but for a very short letter".[19] In 1713 he sent word to an unnamed correspondent: "I find the Queen will not have the Cabinet till Monday, so that I shall write to Lord Presy to attend my Lords of the Council tomorrow [Sunday] night att the Cock-Pit".[20]

By itself such information would indicate some difference, however slight, in respect of the two expressions. If notices of this character predominated there could be little doubt that cabinet and committee of the council were regarded to some extent or in some respects as two separate and different bodies. In 1890 John Morley, writing an account of Walpole, valuable because of sureness of interpretation based on his own experience in ministerial work, and to a less extent on some acquaintance with the sources for the earlier time in question, cited various passages of this kind, and declared that there was a difference between cabinet and committee of council, though he was unable to explain what it was.[21]

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[18] Hedges to Mr. Burchett, Cockpit, 27 April 1706: S. P. D. E. B., cciv. 489.

[19] Letter of 15 December 1711: Bolingbroke, *Letters*, ii. 69.

[20] St. John to——: S. P. D., Anne, xxi, July 1713.

[21] *Walpole* (London, 1890), pp. 145-148.

In 1702, just after the accession of Anne, James Vernon, secretary of state, wrote to the English minister in Vienna, "I received this day your letters of the 8th of March, and have already communicated them to a committee of the Lords of the Council, which method will be taken hereafter, in order to make a report to her Majesty". Shortly after Vernon told him: "I have received your letter of the 18th, and have read it to her Majesty at the Cabinet Council, which began to sit yesterday for the first time".[22] Apparently at this time Vernon meant to make some distinction between the two. If a distinction was intended, however, it would seem to have disappeared shortly, since the queen was soon at the "committee" as well as at the "cabinet". In May Secretary Hedges wrote to Stepney that recent letters of his had been laid before the queen "& a Com$^{tee}$ of the Councill".[23] In September he declared that a letter had been brought to the queen's attention "in the Committee of Councill here".[24] About the same time one of the under-secretaries wrote to another: "The Queen has appointed the Lords of the Committee to attend Her to morrow about 12 a clock".[25]

In 1712 the Duc d'Aumont, writing an account of England, declared that the cabinet council met in the queen's presence only once a week, on Monday evenings, unless some affair of importance arose in the meantime. But the members of this council met in the office of the senior secretary of state, where they prepared agenda for report to the queen.[26] Here also a distinction seems to be intended, though it may be no more than what the author fancied was the difference between a formal meeting of the cabinet and the meeting at other times of the members of the cabinet group. In 1717 a "List of the Cabinet Council" containing thirteen names was drawn up in connection with the form of a summons to members to attend meetings. Following the form, in which the writer first inserted, then crossed out "St James" as the place where cabinets would meet is the memorandum:[27]

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[22] Letters to George Stepney, Whitehall, 13, 24 March 1701-2: *Vernon Letters* (London, 1841), iii. 194, 202.

[23] Letter from Whitehall, 12 May 1702: S. P. F. E. B., cc. 220.

[24] Letter to——, Bath, 11 September 1702: Add. MS., 29588, fo. 202.

[25] John Tucker to John Ellis, Bath, 23 September 1702: Add. MS. 28889, fo. 279.

> Notice to be given to the Gentlemen Ushers and Keepers of the Council Chamber When a Comee at the Office, say are desired to meet at the Earl of Sunderland's Office in the Cockpit &ca.

Here there can be no doubt that cabinet and committee are thought of as identical in respect of the members who composed them. It is less certain whether the writer meant that "cabinet" met at St. James's—or at some other place where the king was, "committee" at the secretary's office, or that the "cabinet" which he also called "committee" when desired to meet at the secretary's office was to be told to meet there.

The German scholar, Felix Salomon, believed that the meetings described by D'Aumont in the intervals of the Monday night cabinet meetings were what were at other times called committees of council, and went on to deduce the assertion that the cabinet of the period of George I was the successor of the committee of council and not of the cabinet council of Anne.[28] That the lords of the cabinet council meeting apart from the sovereign were known as the lords of the committee or the committee of council there is often evidence to render probable enough, and some investigation of the sources might make this seem the proper solution. On the other hand, there is much evidence to establish the identity of cabinet and committee, at the same time that the apparent distinction is frequently confronted, as will be shown, with the presence of the sovereign in what the record designates specifically as "committee of council". In support of the hypothesis that the committee of council of Anne and not her cabinet developed into the Hanoverian cabinet council there is no evidence whatever.

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[26] "Le Conseil du Cabinet ne s'assemble en présence de la Reyne qu'une fois la semaine qui est le lundi au soir, à moins que pendant cet intervale il ne survienne quelque affaire particulière. Les membres de ce Conseil s'assemblent dans le bureau du plus ancien secretaire d'Estat, et là ils préparent ce qu'ils ont à rapporter devant la Reyne." Quoted in Felix Salomon, *Geschichte des Letzten Ministeriums Königin Annas von England* (Gotha, 1894), p. 356, note.

[27] S. P. D., George I, ix, May 1717.

An explanation somewhat different has been given by the principal authority on the history of England for this period. In 1896 Wolfgang Michael published the first volume of his great work. In addition to much study in other sources he had derived particular assistance from the reports of the Prussian representative, Bonet, sent back from England in the early years of the eighteenth century. Writing in 1715 Bonet declared that from ignorance of English affairs George I had not been able to abolish a council which his predecessor's ignorance of business had allowed to be introduced: "I mean the committee of the cabinet council, composed of the principal officers, who meet without the king and arrange all things, to give an account afterwards of the result to the king in council". The necessity of continuing this body deprived the king of much light upon business, so that of a great deal he knew the exterior only, this conferring great power upon his ministers.[29] Michael's interpretation based upon Bonet's statement and other information, was that before the accession of George I the cabinet, an inner council consisting solely of the most trusted servants of the crown, met always in the presence of the sovereign. But in the previous reign the members of the cabinet often met with the queen not present: then they formed the committee of the cabinet council. By contemporaries the committee of the cabinet council was usually called the committee of council. It was not a separate body along with the cabinet and the privy council, as Morley had indicated and a Salomon had believed. The committee of council, more exactly the committee of the cabinet council, was merely the cabinet council called a committee because the sovereign was not present.[30] From the committee of the cabinet council developed the cabinet in the later sense of the word. Thus the cabinet meeting without the sovereign developed from a practice in the time of Anne.[31]

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[28] "Diese Zusammenkünfte sind es offenbar . . . welche, als "Committee of Council" (Lords of the Council) bezeichnet wurden (vgl. Morley, Walpole, S. 143-147 gegen dessen Ausführungen ich mich richte). Da das Kabinett dann in der nächsten Regierung stets ohne den Monarchen tagte, so fiel die Bezeichnung "Committee of C." hinweg, wenngleich das Kabinett König Georgs recht eigentlich die Fortsetzung des "Committee" und nicht des "Cabinet Council" Königin Annas ist." Salomon, p. 356, note.

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[29] "Cette ignorance de la langue et des affaires . . . n'a pas permis au Roi d'abolir un Conseil que l'ignorance des affaires dans le chef a introduit sous le règne précédent. Je veux parler du Comité du Conseil du Cabinet, composé des principaux officiers, qui s'assemblent en l'absence du Roi, et qui minutent toutes choses, pour rendre compte ensuite du resultat à S. M. en Conseil. Cette nécessité où S. M. est de continuer ce Conseil le prive d'une infinité de lumières, ne lui fait voir que l'écorce de plusieurs affaires et confère un grand pouvoir à ses ministres." Report of Frédéric Bonet, 24 December/4 January 1714-15: quoted in Wolfgang Michael, *Englische Geschichte im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1896), i. 440, note.

[30] "Um als Ausschuss, wie sie sich allsdann nannten, die Geschäfte durchzuberaten und der Königin später im Kabinette nur das Ergebnis mitzuteilen und ihre Entscheidung zu erbitten. So ergiebt sich der Unterschied zwischen dem *Cabinet Council* und dem *Committee of the Cabinet Council,* je nachdem bei den Verhandlungen die Königin anwesend war oder nicht." *Ibid.,* p. 439.

These conclusions, that the committee of the council was a committee of the cabinet, in the sense that it was the cabinet members meeting without the sovereign present, and that what was essentially the cabinet without the king had its beginning in the time of Anne, appear to be based on insufficient knowledge of the sources for the study of this subject, and they may well illustrate the danger of relying on very little evidence for the solution of an intricate problem. The attempted distinction between cabinet and committee based on presence of the sovereign at cabinet meetings and his absence from committees is seen to have no foundation when again and again William, Mary, or Anne are mentioned as being " at the committee " or with " the lords of the committee " in meetings of which minutes are taken and from which orders and directions are issued. In like manner Charles II had often been present at the committee of foreign affairs, then at the committee of intelligence, and afterwards at " the committee "; while long before him Charles I had presided over meetings of his committee of foreign affairs. In respect of these meetings contemporaries had spoken of committee or cabinet as they pleased.[32] Bonet's mention of the "committee of the cabinet council" might seem to give some support to Michael's contention, but actually this contention is merely a hypothesis, however categorical the form of the statement. The communication of the Prussian envoy has no more than the allusion and the term, the interpretation is Michael's entirely. Were Bonet exactly informed as to the intricacies of English executive government at this time from long participation and precise knowledge, his allusion, in the absence of other evidence might properly become the premise for such a deduction. He was, however, a foreigner and

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[31] " So ward aus dem Kabinetts-ausschusse, der ohne den Souverän tagte, das Kabinett in dem späteren Sinne des Wortes . . . So liegen die Anfänge des ohne den Souverän tagenden Kabinetts also schon in der Zeit Annas. Das *Committee of the Cabinet Council,* von den Zeitgenossen gewöhnlich kurz *Committee of Council* genannt, ist nicht . . . eine besondere Behörde neben Kabinett u. Privy Council." *Ibid.,* 440, and note.

[32] The idea that privy councillors meeting without the sovereign present can meet only as a committee of the council is a modern one. According to Sir William Anson, " Every meeting of the Privy Council from which the King is absent is a Committee, even if every member should be summoned and present." *The Law and Custom of the Constitution,* II. i (1907), p. 98. This idea developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, though apparently it was not stated so early.

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It should be said, however, that while the king, or, in his absense from England, the regent, not to speak of the lords justices, was almost invariably present at a privy council meeting as the Hanoverian period progressed, yet there are instances of the sovereign's absence in the reign of George III. In 1780 there was a session of "the Council" at Whitehall, attended by thirty-five without the king: P. C. R., cxxv, 9 June 1780. Next year an order was issued "in Council" at St. James, six without the king being present: *ibid.*, cxxvi, 17 January 1781. It may be that sometimes when absent his presence was none the less assumed: *ibid.*, cxxv, 26 July 1780. Previously there had been numerous meetings of the privy council without the king. In the earlier Stuart period most privy councils were held with the sovereign absent, while in Elizabeth's time the privy council records seldom if ever note the queen as attending a meeting. It may be remembered that the second scene of the first act of Shakespeare's *Henry the Eighth* is given as "*The Council-chamber*" and has the direction "*Enter* King HENRY, Cardinal WOLSEY, *the* Lords of the Council" and others. This play appears to have been written about 1613, so that in so far as it may embody anything that Shakespeare knew of privy council procedure, it may refer either to the time of James I or that of Elizabeth. In the richly embellished edition of the author's works by James O. Halliwell (London, 1853-65), this scene is pictured by the reproduction of a "contemporary Engraving" which bears the title "King Henry the eyght", and which the editor says is believed to have been designed by Hans Holbein (xii, list of plates, and plate facing page 74). The editor designates it as "King Henry the Eighth in the Council Chamber." The picture shows the king with a group of twenty-five or more, all seated. The provenance of this engraving I have not been able to trace with certainty, and can give no opinion as to the propriety or authenticity of its representation or of the descriptive legends affixed to it.

an outsider, and while as a rule his knowledge was probably excellent, it is necessary to be cautious in using testimony of this kind in such a matter unless it tallies exactly with much information given at the time by English ministers and officials themselves. Actually there remains a vast body of such information to the effect that the committee was a committee, informal or not, of the privy council, that the sovereign was often present at this committee as he had long been present when he chose at various council committees, while almost never either at this time or for a long while after, is there any mention of a committee of the cabinet council. Recently it has come to be the custom to divide the cabinet into committees or parts for preliminary consideration of particular kinds of business, and occasionally that may have been done at an earlier time. In 1712 a correspondent wrote: "The D. of Richmond's house was search'd for Macartney and the Committee of Cabinet sent for him to acquaint him with it".[33] Here the meaning is not certain, and not to be surely known without additional illustrative information: it may be that to a part of the cabinet was committed the investigation in question; it may be that the writer merely mentions the committee which was the cabinet. Perhaps Bonet's expression is likewise to be understood not in partitive but constitutive or descriptive sense—that when he wrote "committee of the cabinet council" he meant not a part of the cabinet but the committee which was otherwise called the cabinet, as one might speak of the kingdom of England or the city of London. That, however, is also hypothesis only. Reliance is not to be put upon any such supposition, but upon a great body of data from the sources of the time opposed to Bonet's expression and to Michael's deduction.[34]

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[33] Lord Berkeley of Stratton to the earl of Strafford, 2 December 1712: *The Wentworth Papers, 1705-1739* (ed. by J. J. Cartwright, London, 1883), p. 306.

Altogether, perhaps, no problem concerning the history of cabinet and privy council has been more obscure and perplexing than what relates to "the committee", the "lords of the committee" and the "cabinet council" during the latter part of the seventeenth century and the earlier part of the eighteenth. It may be that all the difficulties in respect of the various questions that arise can never be entirely disposed of. The following data, however, are proposed to substantiate the thesis that generally during this time "the committee" or "the committee of council"—when used obviously in particular sense with respect to the principal members of the privy council—or the "lords of the committee" and the "cabinet" or "cabinet council" were one and the same body.

The committee of foreign affairs or cabinet in the period before 1679 had often met in the office of one of the secretaries of state. So it had been with "the committee", and the cabinet in the years just after, and so it was with the "committee of council", lords of the committee, and cabinet in later times. In September 1683 Secretary Jenkins wrote that it was the opinion of "My lords that meet here at my office" that if any good was to be done in the elections then approaching at Bristol, it would be by the influence and authority of the duke of Beaufort there.[35] The following March he informed the attorney general that "the Lords tht mett this Evening here at my Office" wished him to remember a proclamation he was preparing in respect of the neutrality of his majesty's ports in time of war.[36] In April 1684 he wrote again to the attorney general: "His Maty haveing directed that the Lords who use to meet at the Secretaries Office, should some time this weeke have a particular meeting about the Citty Charter", the lord chief justice and he were desired to be present, Secretary Godolphin would notify him when to come.[37] In 1687 Don Pedro Ronquillo, the Spanish ambassador in London, said that he had been received in conference several times by commissioners (*comissarios*) of the highest rank—enumerating the lord chancellor, the head of the treasury, the lord president, and the two secretaries of state, in the office of the principal secretary, where Charles II had held the cabinet councils.[38] In September 1688, shortly before the fall of James II, a correspondent wrote: "I am now in Lord Sunderland's office, where a Cabinet Council is holding, the King in it; came from Windsor this evening on purpose, goes to-morrow to Chatham".[39]

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[34] It may be added that Michael's contentions are to be found substantially in I. S. Leadam's *History of England from the Accession of Anne to the Death of George II* (*1702-1760*)—the ninth volume of *The Political History of England*—(London, 1909), pp. 231, 232. The author says that George I was not able to understand his ministers, and so left them to discuss matters and report to him their conclusions; that such deliberations, unattended by the sovereign, had been common enough; that these meetings had gone by the name of "committee of council" as distinguished from sittings of the "cabinet council"; that when the absence of the king became normal the distinction gradually disappeared: "the committee of council and the cabinet became a separate entity" (p. 231)—the meaning of this last statement is perhaps not clear.

A year later, when William and Mary were established, Secretary Nottingham ordered one "to attend certain

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[35] Letter of 1 September 1683: S. P. D. E. B., lxiv. 84.

[36] Letter of 9 March 1683-4: *ibid.,* fo. 194.

[37] Letter of 14 April 1684: *ibid.,* fo. 223.

[38] "Y siempre tube el mejor lugar tomando el de enfrente la puerta y los comissarios el otro es verdad que no havia buffete en medio pero fueron en la secretaria del Primero Secretario de estado en Palacio y adonde el Rey difunto havia los consejos del Gabinete." Despatch from London, 10 November 1687 (N. S.): Mackintosh Collections, xvi—Add. MS. 34502, fos. 106, 107.

[39] Letter to J. Ellis, 18 September 1688: *Ellis Correspondence* (London, 1829), ii. 192.

Lords of His Maj$^{ty}$ Privy Councill at My Lord Shrewsbury's Office in Whitehall on Friday next".[40] "Yesterday," wrote Luttrell in his memoranda in 1693, "a cabinet councill was held at the lord Nottinghams office, where the merchants attended, praying the embargo on the Virginia and the West India fleets might be taken off, which was ordered accordingly".[41] In 1694 by order of the queen a letter was directed to various ministers, asking each one of them "to meet with some other Lords of the Councill at fiue this afternoon at m$^{r}$ Secry Trenchards office": it was addressed to the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the marquis of Normanby, the earl of Romney, and the lord chamberlain; the two secretaries were crossed out in the list—it being thought unnecessary, perhaps, to inform them; and a "quere" was noted, whether to summon the lord steward. The paper was endorsed "Summons for the Cabinet Councill to meet".[42] Four years later James Vernon writing to the duke of Shrewsbury said: "I have communicated your letter to my Lord Archbishop and Lord Chancellor, who have agreed to meet to-morrow at nine in the morning, at the Archbishop's lodgings in the Cock Pit, I not being assured that your Grace's rooms were furnished. I have sent a summons to the rest of the Lords of the Cabinet, who are in town". Next day he wrote: "The Lords of the Cabinet Council met this morning, viz. Lord Archbishop, Lord Chancellor, Lord Privy Seal, and earl of Romney".[43] In August 1702 Luttrell noted that one morning the lord keeper and the archbishop of Canterbury, with several other lords of the council, sat at the earl of Nottingham's office upon affairs of the fleet, having before them the lord high admiral's council.[44] In January 1712 Peter Wentworth learned that on the previous day there had been a cabinet council sitting " at the Cock-pit ".[45]

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[40] Nottingham to Captain Minors, 20 September 1689: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 53.

[41] Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs*, etc. (Oxford, 1857), iii. 82.

[42] S. P. D., William and Mary, v. 5 September 1694.

[43] Letters of 8, 9 April 1698: *Vernon Letters*, ii. 37, 39.

During all these years there are numerous references to the lords of the committee and to the cabinet council in such way that evidently mention is being made of the same group. In 1682 it was " the Co̅mittee of Council " to which Charles II proposed various important matters of foreign policy including one " to lessen the Charge at Tangier ". According to Burnet, when, perhaps later, he decided to destroy the works there and abandon the place he " communicated this to the cabinet council," charging them to keep it secret.[46] In the summer of 1690 when Torrington declined battle with the French, Mary relates that she was not inclined to send Russell to the fleet. " I was no sooner a bed but lord Nott. came to me from the lords, who were most of them still at his office ": he sought the queen's permission for the earl of Monmouth to go down to Portsmouth. " I askt who was there, and finding four besides lord Monmouth and lord Nott. of which I remember but three, which were lord President, lord Steward, and Sir John Lowther, the fourth was either lord Pemb. or lord Marl. I thought in myself they were two thirds of the committee, so would carry it if it were put to the vote ". Accordingly, she gave consent. A few days later Nottingham wrote to William that " the Queen, by the Committee's advice, sent Mr. Russell to Dover on Sunday night to take upon him the command of the fleet ".[47] Those who Mary says were left as her

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[44] Luttrell, v. 201.

[45] Letter to the earl of Strafford, 15 January 1711-12: *Wentworth Papers*, p. 251.

[46] Shaftesbury Papers, 6$^B$, no. 445; Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, ii. 434.

[47] Mary to William, 28 June/8 July 1690: Dalrymple, ii, part iii. 123, 124; Nottingham to William, 2 July 1690: *H. M. C., Finch MSS.*, ii. 331.

"Cabinet Council" were nine: the lord president, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, the earl of Pembroke—first lord of the admiralty, the earl of Nottingham—secretary of state, the earl of Marlborough—commander in chief, the earl of Monmouth—without great office, Sir John Lowther—first lord of the treaesury, and Admiral Russell.[48] On one occasion Nottingham wrote: "If the King observes that the hands of all nine of the Committee are not put to the letter written to him, it is not that any of them disagreed, but Sir John Lowther was not well, and two others could not stay, it being so very late before it could be despatched".[49] About the same time Mary wrote to William about certain "lemon letters" which were giving out the very debates "of the committee" as if one of the lords himself had written them. A little later she wrote that Monmouth had said to her that the ill going of things was certainly by the fault of some of those in trust; "do you not see how all you do is known, that what is said one day in the cabinet councill is wrote next day to France"?[50] Shortly after she wrote that differences of opinion about the command of the fleet were considered in the "committee"; a few days later she wrote that the consideration was being made in "the cabinet council".[51]

In 1692 Nottingham wrote to Sir John Guise that the lord president had communicated his letter to "the Cabinet Councill". Some days later Guise was told that "the Lords of the Committee" had been acquainted with another of his letters.[52] In June Nottingham sent to William Blathwayt a copy of proposals made by "the Comittee" to the East India Company along with the company's reply; the answer had been considered at "the Cabinett Councill".[53] A few days after Blathwayt wrote to Nottingham acknowledging receipt of the letter: the king ordered the "Cabinett Councill" to frame a new charter for the company.[54] Within three weeks Nottingham replied that "the Committee" had thought well to direct the attorney general to prepare a draft in form upon the heads and regulations about which information had already been sent.[55] In 1693 Secretary Trenchard wrote to the admirals of the fleet: "The Queen commands me to signify to you Her pleasure, that you should stay in Town to attend the Cabinett Councill on Tuesday next in the afternoon". The letter was written on Sunday. The next day he wrote to them that the queen "would have you attend Her to morrow in the afternoon at the Committee of Councill, to give Her an account what has been proposed or agreed upon at the said Councill of the Flagg Officers".[56]

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[48] Doebner, *Memoirs of Mary,* pp. 27, 28; Luttrell, ii. 51.

[49] Letter to Sir Robert Southwell, 7 July 1690: *Finch MSS.,* ii. 347.

[50] Letters of 28 June/8 July and 7/17 July 1690: Dalrymple, ii. part iii. 124, 133.

[51] Mary to William, 22 July/1 August and 30 July/9 August 1690: *ibid.,* ii, part iii. 146, 147, 152.

[52] Letters of 29 April, 10 May 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 434, 444.

In January 1694, the house of lords having sought from the king information concerning what had been done by his ministers before the loss of the Smyrna Fleet the past summer and when the news of the sailing of the French fleet from Brest had been communicated to the admirals of the English fleet, William permitted such of his privy council as were of the house of lords to declare: "That the Letter mentioned by the Earl of *Nottingham* was laid before the Committee of Council, and took it for granted that the Intelligence therein contained was sent to the Admirals of the Fleet".[57] Next day two Dutch representatives in England sent back despatches, one of them saying that the house of lords had asked the king to inform them what time the cabinet council had learned that the French fleet had sailed, the other that the king had sent a message to the lords giving permission to communicate what the cabinet council had known about the disaster at sea the last summer.[58]

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[53] Letter from Whitehall, 21 June 1692: Add. MS. 37991, fo. 100.

[54] Letter from Genap, 30 June/10 July 1692: *ibid.,* fo. 105.

[55] Letter from Whitehall, 19 July 1692: *ibid.,* fo. 126.

[56] Trenchard to the admirals of the fleet, Whitehall, 23, 24 April 1693: S.P.D.E.B., ccv. 5, 6.

In April there was a meeting of William and twelve, concerning which one set of minutes was endorsed "Committee of Councill". According to these minutes among other things it was ordered with respect to Ireland "That the Justices giue their opinion whether they thinke it convenient to call a Parliament there and when. & particularly in relation to the right of beginning the mony bills in the House of Commons there".[59] Among the papers of Shrewsbury, the other secretary, are the minutes of a meeting that same day at Kensington: present the king and ten—all ten of them among those listed in the minutes by Trenchard, but the lord privy seal and Portland omitted. These minutes by Shrewsbury are somewhat different from those made by the other secretary, but they include: "Being proposed that a Parliament in Ireland should be called, Mr. Secretary was directed to write to the Justices to deliver their opinion whether the Parliament will insist upon the right of beginning Money Bills, as they did the last Sessions ".[60] Several weeks later Shrewsbury wrote: " This recalls to mind what was directed at a Cabinet Council some time before the King went [he left 6 May], upon the debate of an Irish Parliament—that Mr. Secretary should write to the Lords Justices to give their opinion how reasonably it might be hoped that a Parliament would meet and sit in good temper, and what methods they would propose to effect it ".[61] About this time William directed that when papers containing demands by the Swedes for compensation for ships detained in England were received, " they should be taken into consideration by the Cabinet Council ". In another communication a week later: " nor does his Majesty think fit to give any directions concerning the Suedish demands, until he receive the opinion of the Lords of the Committee, when they shall have taken them into consideration, according to my letter of the 14-24th past ".[62]

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[57] 15 January 1693-4: *Lords' Journals,* xv. 343.

[58] "L'adresse que les seigneurs firent presenter jeudij au roij, estoit pour suplier S: M: de leur faire communiquer le tems, que le conseil de cabinet ["guerre" is crossed out beneath "cabinet"] avoit eu avis, que la flote de France avoit mis à la voile": L'Hermitage to the states general, London, 26 January 1694 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 OO, fo. 154; "Gisteren liet den coning door een messagie aan het hooger huys weten, dat hij het cabinet conseil permitteerde aan hun bekent te maken wat sij wisten wegens de abruysen ter zee in de laaste somer voorgevallen": F. Baden to the states general, Westminster, 26 January 1694 (N.S.): *ibid.,* fo. 37.

[59] S. P. D., William and Mary, v, 22 April 1694.

For a meeting of six in June 1694 there are minutes endorsed " Committee of Councill ". Among other things it was determined that the fleet should put to sea with all possible expedition; that ten battalions should be embarked on the ships again with one general officer; that such attempt on the enemy's coast should be made as seemed advisable at a council of war attended by flag officers and general officers.[63] Minutes by Shrewsbury of a meeting of the same six ministers that day are endorsed " Cabinet Council at Whitehall ". According to these notes, which are not identical with the other set of minutes, it being proposed whether the fleet should have orders to take ten regiments, or as many as conveniently they could take, on board in order to make some attempt on the coast of France, it was resolved that ten regiments be taken, but to leave it to the council of war what number of land men were useful for the attempt they designed.[64] About this very time Blathwayt, abroad with William, wrote back to Shrewsbury concerning further employment of the fleet and the land forces returned from Brest. He said the king wished "that it be Consider'd by the Committee attending the Queen".[65]

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[60] *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 63.

[61] Shrewsbury to Capel, 14 June 1694: *ibid.,* p. 82.

[62] Blathwayt to Shrewsbury, Tirlemont, 14/24 June 1694 and Roosbeck, 21 June/1 July 1694: *ibid.,* pp. 83, 85.

[63] S. P. D., Naval, iii. 21 June 1694.

During the period 1693-1701 Blathwayt, away with the king during William's repeated journeys abroad, sent back numerous letters containing William's wishes—to the secretaries of state during 1693-4 and to the lords justices during 1695-1701. The lords justices formed a collective regency established for those occasions after Mary's death when the king was out of England. It will be shown hereafter that such a regency was always composed of the members of the cabinet. That is to say, while the king was within the realm certain councillors composed his cabinet; when he was abroad the same personages with particularly specified powers were the lords justices of England. Before the death of Mary, Blathwayt's letters contained frequent allusions to "the Committee"; afterwards such references were to the lords justices always.[66]

During the summer of 1694 and the months following there was much consideration in "the committee" of naval affairs. At the end of July "the lords of the committee" deliberated concerning how long the fleet under Russell should remain in the Mediterranean.[67] A few days later "the committee" again deliberated without reaching a decision.[68] Next came a letter from the king to the secretary asking for the opinion of "the committee" about the matter.[69] During August and September several other meetings were held upon admiralty and naval business: of all of them the minutes have no endorsement of designation, but some of them are alluded to as committees.[70] In the following January Shrewsbury wrote to William that he was glad to hear of the king's intention to recall Sir George Rooke: "I wish the orders may not be delayed beyond this very day; but yet hope they will not be dispatched without calling a cabinet council. Those lords will think themselves much slighted, if after having been consulted upon that matter all along, they should now be left out, in a point so very material; besides, at the same time these orders are sent, there are many other considerations, which no single person can recollect to lay before your majesty, so fully as the committee".[71]

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[64] Minutes of 21 June 1694: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 85.

[65] Letter from Roosbeck, 18/28 June 1694: Add. MS. 37992, fo. 70.

[66] Blathwayt's Letter Book: Add. MS. 37992.

[67] Shrewsbury to William, Whitehall, 31 July/10 August 1694: Coxe, *Correspondence of Shrewsbury,* p. 63. That day Shrewsbury took minutes of a meeting of eight—he does not designate those present—at which naval and military matters were considered: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 107.

In 1696 Sir William Trumbull, one of the secretaries of state, wrote to the lord keeper: "The Committee of Council being to examine tomorrow the persons Vaughan has named in his confession, I desire you will let me know whether you judge it fit to have Vaughan himself brought thither at the same time to be further examined." [72] The next day James Vernon, private secretary of the duke of Shrewsbury, and acting virtually as secretary of state in Shrewsbury's partial retirement, wrote to his employer:

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[68] Shrewsbury to William, 3/13 August 1694: Coxe, p. 65. Minutes of such a meeting, undesignated, and attended by six—where in his letter he stated that seven were present—are given by Shrewsbury for this day: *Buccleuch MSS.*, p. 109.

[69] William to Shrewsbury, 6/16 August 1694: Coxe, p. 68.

[70] *Buccleuch MSS.*, pp. 111, 117, 125, 131, 138, 139, 141.

[71] Letter of 22 January 1694-5: Coxe, *Correspondence of Shrewsbury*, pp. 78, 79.

[72] Letter to Sir John Somers, Whitehall, 1 December 1696: *H.M.C.*, *Marquess of Downshire MSS.*, I. ii. 714.

"There is a meeting at your Grace's at five this evening of some of the Cabinet, viz., the Archbishop, Lord Keeper, Lord Privy Seal, Lord Portland, and Mr. Secretary. Several people have been called in and examined, but I know not upon what points, not being required to attend. I am told it is upon the information of Captain Vaughan, who was reproved on this account." [73]

In 1700 Secretary Vernon and the earl of Oxford agreed to propose to the lord chancellor to ask the king to order that Captain Kidd, the pirate, should "be brought to Whitehall, and a Committee of the Council be appointed to meet immediately upon it, and take his examination". The chancellor approved, "and as soon as he was brought to town, the Cabinet Council should be summoned and meet *de die in diem,* till they had fully examined him, and taken it down in writing".[74]

Use and interchange of the terms is well shown in miscellaneous correspondence from the secretary's office during a few days at the end of May and the beginning of June 1702. Tuesday, 26 May, Secretary Nottingham wrote to the postmaster general that "the Lords of the Cabinet Councill" approved the draft of a letter that he had sent—let it go to Paris, also let him repair the old Corunna packet boats.[75] The same day he wrote to another that "the Lords of the Cabinet Councill" thought it necessary that instructions should be prepared for the commissioners for the sick and wounded.[76] In a memorandum written afterwards about this it is said that "it was the Opinion of the Lords of the Council" that instructions should be prepared for the commissioners for sick and wounded prisoners.[77] Next day, 27 May Nottingham wrote to the lord mayor of London that he sent him a paper containing information against a certain one alleged to have spoken treasonable words, "by direction of the Lords of the Committee of Councill".[78] The same day he wrote to the commissioners of trade that "the Lords of the Com^tee^" thought that the proposal made by Mr. Dummer for corresponding with her majesty's plantations in America ought to be duly examined.[79] The same day he wrote that a petition having been laid before "the Lords of the Comm̄ittee of Councill", their lordships had given an order thereupon.[80] The same day also he wrote to another that "the Comittee of Councill" had given order that one of the regiments should be armed and recruited as was proper for her majesty's service.[81] Again the same day he wrote that it had been represented to "the com^tee^ of Council" that for some time there had been no frigate at Guernsey; their lordships desired this to be brought to the attention of the lord admiral.[82] In addition he wrote to the governor of Jersey saying that the governor's letter had been shown to "the Lords of the Committee of Councill".[83] On Thursday, 28 May he wrote that the two old packet boats at Falmouth were much out of repair—the postmasters had orders to get them repaired. "The Lords of the Committee being made acquainted, that the Admiralty haue sent for these Boats, haue therefore ordered me to giue You this account of them, that You may lay the matter before His Royall Highnesse."[84]

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[73] Letter of 2 December 1696: *Vernon Letters,* i. 95.

[74] Letters of Vernon to Shrewsbury, 6, 9 April 1700: *Vernon Letters,* iii. 9, 10. Actually the scheme was not carried out: *ibid.,* p. 11.

[75] Letter of 26 May 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ. 23, 24.

[76] Nottingham to Mr. Burchett, 26 May 1702: *ibid.,* fo. 25.

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[77] S. P. D., Anne, i, 26 May 1702: no. 38.
[78] Letter of 27 May 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ. 25.
[79] Letter of 27 May 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 26.
[80] Letter to the earl of Romney, 27 May 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 26.
[81] Letter to Blathwayt, 27 May 1702: *ibid.*
[82] Letter to Burchett, 27 May 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 27.
[83] Letter to the governor of Jersey, 27 May 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 28.
[84] Letter to Burchett, 28 May 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 27.

On the following Tuesday, 2 June, he wrote to Admiral Rooke that the admiral's letter having been received and read that day in "the Cabinet-Councill", he had been directed to ask the admiralty to give orders that tenders should go to the fleet at once; the lord treasurer would send all the men employed on certain custom house sloops as soon as possible to help man the fleet.[85] The same day he wrote to the lord treasurer: "The Comm$^{ee}$ of Councill having consider'd the great want there is of Seamen, and of the most effectuall methods of procuring them; and understanding that there is a considerable number employ'd in the Custome-house Sloops, which they apprehend can at this time do little Service . . . have directed me to write to your Lordship to give orders that the men of these Sloops may be sent to the Fleet".[86] Again that day he wrote that "the Com$^{ee}$ of Councill" being informed the tenders from the north and the west had not yet come to the fleet with men, wished the admiralty board to have the tenders bring at once such men as they had.[87] In another letter he said that the memorial concerning English canvas had been read "to the Lords of the Com$^{ee}$ of Councill".[88] In a further letter that day he informed the lieutenant governor of Guernsey that "the Lords of the Committee of Councill" approved what he had done about the shallop from St. Malo.[89] On the next day, Wednesday, 3 June, he wrote to the marshal of Dover Castle: understanding that the jail at Dover was as full of prisoners as could be, he was directed by "the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill" to bid the marshal receive into his custody the French and the Spanish prisoners sent to him.[90] Another letter went to the governor of Pendennis Castle: "the Lords of the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill" approved the governor's care of the French and the Spanish prisoners brought to his castle.[91] To the lord treasurer he wrote that from the lieutenant governor of Guernsey account had come that the French had treated English sailors at St. Malo very well: so "the Com$^{tee}$ of Councill" ordered that certain detained French barks be permitted to return to France.[92] At the same time he wrote to the lieutenant governor of Guernsey that his letter had been read to "the Cabinet Councill": he was directed to say that the proceedings of the French in respect of the English ships at St. Malo had been so just and so fair that the governor should protect the French barks until an order was sent to discharge them—he had written to the lord treasurer for that purpose.[93] The same day he wrote to the mayor of Dover that the mayor's letter had been read "to the Lords of the Cabinett Councill" who very well approved what he had done. Nottingham said he had also written, according to the mayor's desire and at their lordships' direction, to the marshal of Dover Castle that he take into his custody as many prisoners as he could secure conveniently.[94] The same day he wrote to the earl of Romney that "the Lords of the Cabinett Councill" wished a certain memorandum to be considered with report thereupon.[95]

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[85] Nottingham to Rooke, 2 June 1702: *ibid.*, fos. 30, 31.

[86] Letter of 2 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 32.

[87] Letter to Burchett, 2 June 1702: *ibid.*, fos. 32, 33.

[88] Letter to Burchett, 2 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 34.

[89] Letter of 2 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 35.

Finally, that day he wrote: [96]

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[90] Letter of 3 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 36.

[91] Letter of 3 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 37.

[92] Nottingham to the lord treasurer, 3 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 37.

[93] Letter of 3 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 38.

[94] Letter to the mayor of Dover, 3 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 38.

[95] Letter to the earl of Romney, 3 June 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 39.

[96] Nottingham to Burchett, 3 June 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ. 39.

> The enclosed proposall of Mons^r^ Jacqueau (wherein he intimates that the late Lords of the Admiralty can justify his diligence and usefulness in the late Warr in the method he now proposes) having bin read at the Com^tee^ of Councill, I am ordered to transmitt the same to you that it may be laide before his Royall Highness, and when I know his opinion therein I will acquaint the Cabinett with it, that such further measures may be taken as will be most for her Ma^tys^ Service.

In September 1702 one of the under-secretaries wrote to the postmaster general:[97]

> I am commanded by the Lords of the Comittee of Councill in the absence of my Lord the Earle of Nottingham to acquaint you, that they would have you publish the designe of M^r^ Dummer's Vessell to the West Indies, in such manner as is usuall and you shall judge best, that the Merchants and persons concerned may haue due notice of it.

At the same time he wrote to the prince's council:[98]

> The Lords of the Committee of Councill hauing thought it fit that M^r^ Dummers Vessell which pursuant to his Contract is now to saile to the West Indies should be praised by the Navy Board, and also the other Vessells to be employed in that Service, I am commanded in the Absence of my Lord the Earle of Nottingham to acquaint you with it, that you may send the necessary Orders to that purpose.

On the same day he wrote from Whitehall to Dummer himself:[99]

> I am commanded by the Lords of the Cabinett Councill in the absence of my Lord the Earle of Nottingham

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[97] Letter from Whitehall, 16 September 1702: *ibid.*, cxlvi.

[98] Letter of 16 September 1702: *ibid.*

[99] Letter of 16 September 1702: *ibid.*

> to acquaint you, that their Lo$^{ps}$ would haue you order their Vessell to saile to Portsmouth as soon as ready, there to expect sailing Orders.

About the same time Godolphin, with the queen at Bath, wrote to Nottingham that Count Wratislaw—the imperial ambassador—had complained of some disorder and pillage, desiring the queen to give command that the officers responsible should be punished; that Anne was ready to have given immediate orders to the duke of Ormonde accordingly; with difficulty " she was prevailed to deferr it till tomorrow that she could have an opportunity of calling together such Lords of the Cabinett Councill as have the honour to attend her Ma$^{ty}$ in this place, & hear their opinion upon it ".[100] Next day Secretary Hedges wrote to Nottingham: " Upon the complaint of co: uratislau, her Ma$^{ty}$ has been pleased at a com̄ittee of councill this day to give the enclosed orders & instructions to the Du. of Ormonde & S$^{r}$ Geo: Rooke, which I send open with my letters to them for y$^{r}$ Lrdsps information ".[101]

In February 1703 Nottingham wrote: [102]

> The Committee of Councill being informed, th$^{t}$ there is not sufficient care taken of the recruits brought up and carryed to the Savoy, and particularly that they lye upon the boards; I am commanded to desire you to inform y$^{r}$self of this matter, and send me an Acco$^{t}$ th$^{t}$ I may lay the same before the Queen at the Cabinet Councill to morrow.

Some months later a committee of the house of lords attempted an investigation in connection with the so-called Scottish Plot. In answers which Nottingham drafted to the lords in the following March he asserted that suspects had been examined by the "Committee"; he also spoke of one of them being examined by the cabinet council, and he spoke of information given by the other to the committee of council. The lords asserted that in not arresting one of the suspects the committee of council had encouraged the enemies of the queen.[103] For the most part, during these years the secretaries in their letter books speak very frequently of the committee of council, the lords of the committee of the council, and the lords of the committee, not so often of the cabinet council.

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[100] Godolphin to Nottingham, Bath, 23 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 265.

[101] Hedges to Nottingham, Bath, 24 September 1702: *ibid.*, fo. 267.

[102] Nottingham to Blathwayt, Whitehall, 20 February 1702-3: S. P. D. E. B., civ. 214.

In August 1710 the queen in the cabinet council considered information concerning Lord Carmarthen.[104] In September the secretary of state laid before the committee of council a report and various papers about the marquis of Carmarthen.[105]

In March 1711 Guiscard, the French refugee who had first served England and then engaged in communication with French authorities again, was arrested for high treason. According to a correspondent: "He was brought before the Cabinet Council to be examined (they met at Mr. Secretary St. John's office in the Cockpit)".[106] Another wrote that Guiscard was sent for to "the Committee of Council at the Cockpit".[107] Another that to examine Guiscard "the Lords of the Cabinet Council met at the Cockpit, at Mr. Secretary St. John's office". And

[103] Add. MS. 29587, fos. 126-131.

[104] Dartmouth to the bishop of Sarum, 24 August 1710: S. P. D. E. B., cx.

[105] Boyle to the attorney and the solictor general, 19 September 1710: *ibid.*, cix.

[106] Lady Dupplin to her aunt, Abigail Harley, London, 8 March 1710-11: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.*, 15th report, iv. 667.

[107] Peter Wentworth to Lord Raby, 9 March 1710-11: *Wentworth Papers*, p. 185.

the writer, after mentioning those who attended, says: "The Duke of Shrewsbury and the Archbishop were the only members of the Cabinet that were wanting".[108] In his remembrance book Luttrell says that Guiscard was brought "before a committee of council at the cockpit".[109] "A great minister", wrote Swift, referring to Guiscard's attempt to stab Harley, "in high confidence with the Queen . . . sitting in council, in a royal palace, with a dozen of the chief officers of the state, is stabbed at the very board, in the execution of his office, by the hand of a French Papist, then under examination for high treason".[110] To Stella Swift wrote a little later: "Guiscard died this morning at two, and the coroner's inquest have found that he was killed by bruises received from a messenger, so to clear the cabinet counsellors from whom he received his wounds." [111] Writing another story of the affair that year Swift said that Guiscard being seized was taken by the queen's messengers to the Cockpit. "He was brought into the clerks' room, and kept there till the cabinet council was assembled". He adds that there were present "at the committee of cabinet council, the lord keeper, lord president, duke of Ormond, duke of Newcastle, duke of Buckingham, duke of Queensberry, earl Poulet, lord Dartmouth, Mr. Harley, Mr. secretary St. John." [112] In a political account two years after the event Swift declared that in March 1711 the chancellor of the exchequer had been stabbed with a penknife "at the Cockpit, in the midst of a dozen lords of the council, by the

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[108] Letter of ? Harley to Abigail Harley, 22 March 1710-11: *Portland MSS.*, iv. 669.

[109] Luttrell, vi. 700.

[110] *The Examiner,* no. 33: *Prose Works* (London, 1907-8), ix. 207, 208.

[111] *Journal to Stella,* 17 March 1710-11: *Works* ii. 139.

[112] *A True Narrative of What Passed at the Examination of the Marquis de Guiscard,* etc. (1711): *The Works of Swift* (London, 1808), iii. 341.

Sieur de Guiscard".[113] In another version the next year he said that Harley "was stabbed by the Marquis de Guiscard, while he was sitting in the council-chamber at the Cockpit, with a committee of nine or ten lords of the cabinet, met on purpose to examine the marquis, upon a discovery of a treasonable correspondence he held with France." And that he was "brought before the committee of lord's" and examined about it.[114] Burnet's record is that after a letter of Guiscard's had been opened at the post office "and brought to the cabinet council, a messenger was sent from the council to seize on him. He found him walking in St. James's park; and having disarmed him, carried him to the lords, who were then sitting"—where Harley was stabbed.[115] In his letter book about the time of the occurrence, St. John does not speak of the cabinet, though he several times mentions the lords of the committee.[116] In a political narrative attributed to Bolingbroke, printed in 1714, the writer says that Guiscard having been detected in his correspondence by the diligence and fidelity of St. John, was brought before "the Cabinet".[117] In debates in the house of lords the affair was said to have taken place in "a Committee of Your Majesty's Council".[118] The ensuing statute, which made an attempt on the life of a privy councillor in execution of his duty a felony, was passed because Guiscard "being under Examination before a Committee of Her Majesties most Honourable Privy Council" had attacked Harley.[119] The historian Tindall afterwards wrote of "a committee of council being summoned on this extraordinary occasion ".[120]

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[113] *History of the Four Last Years, Prose Works,* x. 97.

[114] *Memoirs Relating to That Change Which Happened in the Queen's Ministry in the Year 1710, Prose Works,* v. 387, 388.

[115] *History of His Own Time,* vi. 38.

[116] S. P. D. E. B., cxi.

[117] [Bolingbroke?], *Considerations upon the Secret History of the White Staff,* etc. (London [1714]), p. 18.

[118] *Lords' Journals,* xix. 251.

[119] 9 Anne c. 21: *Statutes of the Realm,* ix. 479.

> In December 1713
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> The Lord Bolingbroke acquainted the Board [of trade], That Mr Prior had signify'd that the French Commissaries were ready to come over so soon as ours should be ready to treat with them . . . That Her Majesty therefore expected that such Matters as may be proper for Her Commissaries, should be immediately dispatch'd, and that during the Negotiation the Lords of the Cabinet-Council should be assistant to the Board in their Consultation upon those Matters.

Bolingbroke told them that difficulties had been raised in France about certain clauses. The commissioners of trade answered that they had already considered these matters, and would lay their opinion before his lordship next day. On the following day [121]

> The Board being sent for to the Lords of the Committee of Council at the Lord Bolingbroke's Office: They went accordingly; And the Lord Guilford [one of the board of trade] was desir'd to present to their Lordships the Board's Observations upon the Treaty of Commerce with France, mention'd in Yesterday's Minutes.

Previously Bolingbroke had referred to those who would receive the board of trade, 18 December, as "the Lds of the Council who are to meet on Fryday at my Office ".[122]

In July 1716, during the temporary regency of George, prince of Wales, Methuen, acting secretary of state, in place of Stanhope, who accompanied the king to Hanover, writing to Stanhope, said:

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[120] *The Continuation of Mr. Rapin's History of England*, etc. (London, 1763), v (xvii). 352.

[121] Journal of the Board of Trade: C.O. 391, xxiv, 17, 18 December 1713.

[122] Bolingbroke to the commissioners of trade, Windsor, 14 December 1713: S.P.D.E.B., cxiv. It may be added that of the meeting in question there is nothing in P. C. R., lxxxiv.

> This Memorial [from the Portuguese minister asking that English men-of-war convoy the Brazil fleet to Lisbon] was read at the Cabinet Council, & by his Royal Highness's order referred to the Lords of the Admiralty, who reported that what the King of Portugal had desired might be complied with, without any Inconvenience to his Ma$^{ty's}$ Service, since Admiral Baker might be ordered to send two of the Men of War under his Command which are coming home to perform that Service. And it appearing to his Royal Highness and the Lords of the Committee as the Embassador had represented, that the English Nation was as much concerned in the Safety of that Fleet as the Portugueses themselves

the request was granted.[123]

About the same time complaints against Colonel Congreve, lieutenant governor of Gibraltar, were laid before "the Lords of the Committee at the Cockpit". The lords thought that the matter should be referred to the privy council, and that it should be laid "before H. R. H. in the Cabinet Council next day." That was done, and Colonel Congreve ordered to come home. "This Matter is to be kept very secret, and no body yet knows any thing of it, but the Lords of the Cabinet Council."[124]

In September 1716 negotiations, especially about demolition of fortifications at Mardyke, were proceeding between British officials and the French representative. Methuen writing to Stanhope said that "the Lords of the Committee" met at the Cockpit, and agreed upon the answer to be given to D'Iberville. The next day it was laid before the prince, and read to "the Cabinet Council", where it was approved by his royal highness, and then

[123] S. P. D. E. B., cclxvii, 17 July 1716.

[124] Methuen to Stanhope, 10 August 1716: *ibid.*

sent to D'Iberville.[125] A few days later he wrote that " the L$^{ds}$ of the Com$^{ee}$ " were to meet at the Cockpit next day, where the negotiations about Mardyke would be fully considered, and that what passed there would be laid " before H. R. H. in the Cabinet Councill on Thursday ".[126] In November Townshend, the secretary of state who had remained in England, wrote to George I about these negotiations: he said, writing in French, that the lords of the council and his royal highness would do him the justice to bear witness with how much ardor and assiduity Methuen and he had worked to bring the business to prompt and happy conclusion.[127] In the original English draft of this letter " the committee of Council " appears for " les seigneurs du conseil ".[128] Just before George I returned Methuen wrote that all of Stanhope's letters had been read before his royal highness and the lords of the committee, and that they would again be laid before his royal highness at the cabinet council.[129]

Meanwhile other instances make it uncertain whether a distinction is to be understood or not. In 1713 St. John wrote to the queen: " The Committee of Councill sate till three to-day, and went through the examination of the whole state of the Northern affairs; on which Mr. Secretary Bromley will have the honour to report to your Majesty next Sunday . . . I humbly presume your Majesty would have the Cabinet, as usual, on Sunday." [130] It is not possible to say positively whether in this instance, as in some of the others, the writer intends to speak of two bodies which he considers to be different or whether he uses without distinction one or the other term as he pleases to designate the same body.

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[125] Letter from Hampton Court, 8 September 1716: S. P. D. E. B., cclxvii.

[126] Methuen to Stanhope, Hampton Court, 11 September 1716: *ibid.*

[127] " Après que l'article de Mardyke fut renvoyé icy les ingénieurs Anglois, le ministre de France, les seigneurs de conseil, et son altesse royalle même me rendront le justice de temoigner avec combien d'ardeur et d'assiduité Mons. Methuen et moi avons travaillé pour amener cette affaire à une prompte et une heureuse conclusion." Letter of 11/22 November 1716: Coxe, *Walpole,* ii. 130.

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] S. P. D. E. B., cclxvii, 9 January 1716-17.

[130] Letter of 20 September 1713: Bolingbroke, *Letters,* iv. 294.

Among the state papers of 1717 is a "List of the Cabinet Council" containing thirteen names followed by a form of a summons to members: "Whitehall May 1717

Are to Attend his Magesty at S$^{t}$ James's to morrow being the day of May instant at of the Clock in the Evening". This is followed by the memorandum: "Notice to be given to the Gentlemen Ushers and Keepers of the Council Chamber When a Com$^{ee}$ at the Office, say are desired to meet at the Earl of Sunderland's Office in the Cockpit &c$^{a}$".[131] In November 1739 among numerous "Minutes", most of which are undesignated but which probably refer to meetings of the cabinet council, and some of which are specifically designated as of the cabinet, is the record of a meeting undescribed at which ten were present: lord president—earl of Wilmington, lord steward—duke of Dorset, lord chamberlain—duke of Grafton, earl of Pembroke—groom of the stole, earl of Ilay—lord keeper of the great seal of Scotland, earl of Harrington—secretary of state, Sir Robert Walpole—first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, Sir Charles Wager—first lord of the admiralty, Sir John Norris—admiral of the fleet, and the duke of Newcastle—secretary of state.[132] In his journal under this date Norris wrote: "This Euening was a meting of the committe of Counsell at the Duke of Newcastle office present his Grace the Dukes of Dorset and Grafton the Earle of Pembrook and Ila,—and Lord Harrington S$^{ir}$ Robert Walpole S$^{r}$ Charles Wager and my selfe".[133] Nine out of the ten in these lists correspond. It may be added that while Sir John's lists agree closely with corresponding ones they do not always agree exactly, and a little later he observes that "Lord Willminton had not often been present".[134]

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[131] S. P. D., George I, ix, May 1717.

[132] S. P. D., Various, ii, 5 November 1739.

[133] Add. MS. 28132, 5 November 1739.

All in all, it would seem that in the period of William and afterwards in the time of Anne there was generally no distinction implied by the terms "committee of council" or "lords of the committee"—when used obviously to designate a meeting of the principal ministers—and "cabinet council". It has been shown that the sovereign attended one as well as the other. No distinction whatever can be perceived with respect to personnel. The important work of the government, the conduct of foreign relations under the sovereign, the managing of various tasks that particularly concerned the crown were done in the one or the other apparently without any difference. It might be thought that even with the same tasks, the same personnel, and the same methods there might be some slight difference in respect of the distinction that if the principal ministers acted as the informal confidential council of the crown they were called cabinet council, if they acted more obviously in capacity of privy councillors they were conceived to be a committee of the council and known as the lords of the committee: but there is nothing in the records of the time to substantiate such a distinction. It might be thought that the lords acted in a preliminary confidential way as the cabinet, but when their work was to be brought forward for action they presented it as lords of a committee of the council: but it should be noted that generally when the record seems to imply the possibility of a distinction between cabinet and committee, the preliminary work is spoken of as done in the committee and the meeting to follow is called a cabinet council.

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[134] Add. MS. 28132, 22 November 1739.

Some slight distinction in the use of the terms can be traced with respect to the preponderant usage of the terms respectively, although there are many exceptions. The sovereign attends the committee as well as the cabinet, but when the meeting is called a cabinet the sovereign is almost invariably present. An exception is the cabinet that examined Guiscard in 1711, which was however by some called committee of the council. Both cabinet and committee met in various places: but, though there are many instances to the contrary, in course of time the meeting at the secretary's office or near the council chamber in the Cockpit was generally called committee while the cabinet was apt to be held where the sovereign was residing. Whether these distinctions meant anything to contemporaries one cannot be sure. They may be merely the accidental results yielded by the evidence that survives. Meanwhile another distinction seems to be that a meeting of the principal ministers was more apt to be called cabinet by outsiders, but when responsible officials, like secretaries of state, spoke of it they were more apt to designate it committee. But again there are numerous exceptions.

None the less, it would seem that some distinction in usage of the terms, some enlarging differentiation marked by nomenclature, gradually developed, and was becoming apparent in the latter years of Anne. Anne was certainly at a committee of the council in 1708, and Queen Caroline was present at another as late as 1729. Yet in her last years Anne is mentioned only in cabinet councils, where she had so frequently been present with the lords of the committee in her earlier years and where William had been in the committee of council on many occasions. As time went on, while there was no distinction by any definition and while the allusions continue elusive and difficult to determine exactly, yet it would seem that in the minds of some a discrimination existed. Where in the time of Charles II, William, and the earlier years of Anne those who spoke of the meetings of the principal ministers called them "committee" or "cabinet", apparently as they chose, without intending to express any difference, in the later years of Anne it would seem that there was increasing tendency to speak of "lords of the committee" and cabinet, as though there was the one body and beside it another. It may be, accordingly, that D'Aumont writing in 1712 represented correctly the situation when he averred, that the cabinet council assembled ordinarily only once a week in presence of the queen, but that at other times the members of this council, rather than the council, met in the office of the secretary to deal with business. Actually this would denote no essential difference between "cabinet" and "the lords", but principally the development of a custom by which one of the two terms previously applied was used in respect of ministers meeting under one set of circumstances while in respect of other circumstances the other term was applied. But if it is possible to establish such a rule at this time it must be remembered that there continue to be numerous instances that constitute exceptions. Prince George, when regent for George I, was certainly present at "the committee", as was Queen Caroline afterward when she acted as regent for George II.

In the earlier period use of the term "cabinet" had not predominated in designating the group of principal ministers to whom the king gave his confidence and who under him performed the principal work in his kingdom. Outsiders might call this body "cabinet", "junto", or "cabal", and informally statesmen and people about court might call it by any of these names, but those who took part in the meetings, especially in their formal or official correspondence generally spoke of it as "committee of foreign affairs" or "the committee". So it was under Charles I and under Charles II. For the time of James II not much evidence has remained, but under William and Mary, under William alone, and afterwards under Anne, for the most part the secretaries of state and others with great part in affairs spoke of "committee of council" and "lords of the committee" rather than of "cabinet council". In the period that followed, however, after the accession of the Hanoverian kings, it was different, for what reason, if any, one may not now say. In the latter years of Anne there was probably some tendency in a measure to restrict the term "cabinet" to meetings of the principal ministers in presence of the sovereign, leaving the term "committee" to meetings of the same ministers apart. Under George I more and more was this the case. Presently George I ceased to attend cabinet councils, but by that time the term "cabinet" was definitely affixed both in official nomenclature and popular usage to meetings of the principal ministers, though they were meeting apart from the king. In that sense—that is, in respect of terms only, Salomon may have rightly affirmed the cabinet council of George I to have been a continuation of the committee of Anne rather than of her cabinet council—especially in respect of her later years. For some time there continue to be exceptions enough, and during the earlier years of George I the student might think that "committee of council" and "cabinet" were as much alternate terms for the same group as before. As late as 1741 Sir John Norris says he was at committees of council, which were attended by the cabinet members and which dealt with important affairs. Such instances, however, became more and more exceptional; and while the principal ministers almost always met as the cabinet council or assembled in private meetings, it would seem that the terms "committee of the council" and "lords of the committee of council" gradually came to be restricted to the meaning of an ordinary committee of the council, which was by this time almost always a committee of the whole privy council. In 1719: "To Day there was a Committee of Council at the Cockpit; after which, there was a Cabinet-Council at St. James's".[135] About the same time was held a chapter of the Garter for electing the earl of Sunderland a knight companion: "the same Day there was a Committee of the Council at the Cockpit, and a Cabinet-Council at St. James's".[136] Whether essential difference was here denoted it is now impossible to say. According to a newspaper in 1732: "Last Night a Committee of his Majesty's most Hon. Privy Council was held at the Cockpit, Whitehall, on some Plantation Affairs." [137] This was most probably an ordinary committee of the whole privy council. Somewhat later: "Yesterday . . . a Cabinet Council was held at St. James's on some Affairs of Importance . . . Last Night a Committee of Council was held at the Cockpit, Whitehall, on Plantation Affairs".[138] After a while the distinction can be perceived very clearly. In 1765 a certain one wrote that there was a difference of opinion "in the Cabinet the other day, when the Committee of the Council was called in about something to be referred to that Board".[139] In 1831 Charles Greville, clerk of the council, wrote: "A Committee of Council sat yesterday at the Office about the coronation; present, the Cabinet, Dukes of Gloucester and Sussex, Archbishop and Bishop London; much discussion and nothing done." [140]

After all, however, nothing had changed but the custom of nomenclature. The principal ministers now met in

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[135] *The St. James's Evening Post*, 21 November 1719.

[136] *The Daily Post*, 23 November 1719.

[137] *The Daily Courant*, 26 October 1732.

[138] *Ibid.*, 19 January 1732-3.

[139] Augustus Hervey to George Grenville, 3 October 1765: *Grenville Papers*, iii. 88.

[140] *The Greville Memoirs* (London, 1874), ii. 165.

"cabinet council" when they did not meet in less formal and more private assembly, and it was no longer the fashion to speak of them as "lords of the committee". That the cabinet continued in theory to be a committee of the privy council was often forgotten now that the cabinet had become in fact a small interior council, and was no longer referred to as "the committee". That it was a committee of the council was sometimes questioned, and actually no such standing committee of the privy council had been appointed since the establishment of the committee of intelligence in 1679. Yet the cabinet was composed only of those who were of the privy council, the legal status of cabinet councillors was that they were privy councillors, and what they advised or what they resolved did not issue in a public order unless ordered in the privy council.

In August 1692 a correspondent of the earl of Rutland wrote: "Our Fleet is returned to Portsmouth, but the reason not known yet. Eight of our Privy Council are gone there this morning."[141] Next day the countess of Rutland wrote to the earl that on the arrival of news of a battle at sea and French losses, the queen thought the news so good as to be worth dispatching "this evening to the Cabinett Councill now at Ports[mouth], where Lord President and most of them hurried down early this morning to our fleet come in there".[142] In 1791 the duke of Leeds relates in his memoranda a conversation with Pitt: "The other Members of the Cabinet", he adds, "being supposed to be near at hand, (the Privy Council sitting that day on Appeals) were sent for, & they all came".[143]

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[141] Sir S. Howe to the earl of Rutland, London, 1 August 1692: *Rutland MSS., H.M.C.,* 12th report, v. 136.

[142] Letter from London, 2 August 1692: *ibid.*

[143] 31 March 1791: Add. MS. 27918, fo. 208.

Not only did the cabinet or " committee ", when it pleased act as a committee of the whole privy council, and even turn itself into a privy council, but from time to time occurs evidence that the cabinet was regarded technically as a committee of the council, after the term " committee of foreign affairs " disappears.

Not infrequently there are instances where the presence of a clerk of the privy council—regular enough at a meeting of a committee of the council—is mentioned or inquired about in connection with meetings of the cabinet council. In November 1689 a committee of the house of lords investigating events of the year 1683 that had to do with the death of Lord Russell and the quo warrantos, examined John Hampden. He testified that after the imprisonment of Lord Russell and Colonel Sydney he was sent for, " and brought before the Cabinet Council, or select Number of Lords ". He recalled that besides the king, the lord keeper, Halifax, and Radnor with three or four others were present, " but he doth not remember they had a Clerk with them ".[144] A memorandum of the duke of Beaufort in 1687 gives account of his appearance before James II, " at his Cabinet Council " in Lord Sunderland's office. Five of the cabinet were present " and Mr. Bridgeman one of the Clerkes standing by ".[145] About 1688 a French report, describing the work and naming the members of the cabinet council, declares that Bridgeman, Sunderland's senior clerk, acted as secretary.[146] In 1712 Bolingbroke wrote: "A clerk of the council was ordered to attend last night at the Cabinet, with a declaration drawn by the Attorney-general, and intended to have been published for the release of all French and Spanish prisoners ".[147] In 1717 one of the under-secretaries wrote to his colleague that summons must be issued for a cabinet council the next afternoon at Hampton Court: "A Clerk of the Councill must be ordered to attend at the same time ".[148] In 1740, at what Sir John Norris describes as a " Cabinet counsell ", the lord president having spoken of petitions that had been presented, it would seem, to the privy council, a clerk of the council was called in to read them. This was no doubt convenient enough, for the meeting was in the duke of Newcastle's office in the Cockpit.[149] Four years later at a meeting of twelve at Whitehall, " Their Lordships are humbly of Opinion . . . That a Cabinet be summon'd to meet, at seven o'Clock this Evening, at the Cockpit: And that a Clerk of the Council do attend." [150]

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[144] *Lords' Journals*, xiv. 378.

[145] 26 October 1687: *Beaufort MSS., H.M.C.*, 12th report, ix. 91.

[146] " Le sieur Bridgeman premier commis du comte de Sunderland fait la fonction de secrétaire de ce conseil." Transcripts from Paris, xlviii. 139.

In 1768 a " Cabinet " held at the lord president's is described as " a meeting of the Committee of the King's Servants "; and another at Lord Suffolk's three years later as " a meeting of the Committee of his Majesty's servants ".[151] Two years later Mr. Rigby speaking in the house of commons said: " the cabinet is well known to consist of a committee, or a few members of the privy council called together for particular purposes; it is not pretended to have any constitutional authority, but it does not therefore follow, that it may not deliberate upon measures to be referred to the privy council that has." [152] In 1774 one of the under-secretaries was informed that Lord Rochford was ready to meet the committee of his majesty's servants; thereupon he summoned a cabinet at

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[147] Letter to Prior, Windsor Castle, 29 September 1712: *Letters,* iii. 112.

[148] Tilson to Delafaye, 8 August 1717: S. P. D., George I, ix.

[149] Add. MS. 28132, 10 January 1739-40.

[150] " Minutes ": S. P. D., Various, v, 12 February 1743-4.

[151] MSS. of the earl of Dartmouth, Patshull House, vii. 281, ix. 354.

[152] *Parliamentary History,* xvi. 837.

Lord Rochford's office.[153] When in 1781 three ministers met at Lord Stormont's office to confer about reinforcing Admiral Darby's fleet, they were described as "a very small Committee of Your Majestys Confidential Servants".[154] In 1785, seven of the principal ministers meeting in what was undoubtedly a cabinet council at Downing Street, a minute was drawn up: "The Committee of Your Majesty's Servants beg Leave to submit to Your Majesty's Consideration their Opinion".[155]

Always, when men thought of it at all, the weight of opinion was that the cabinet was informally, at all events, a continuation of the foreign committee of the last years of Charles II, which had been known as "the committee". In 1689 Halifax records in his journal a conversation between William and himself about who should be in the cabinet: "would have some Commoners, I mentioned Mr Comptroller because hee was join'd in treating and was therefore proper in a Committee of foreign Affairs, he had more mind to Mr Hampden." [156]

In 1740, during a debate in the lords, the duke of Argyll said that formerly the privy council was the administration; it was divided into several committees; some had care of one part of business, some of another; "the cabinet council was then called the committee for foreign affairs." [157] He said that Buckingham when "prime minister" to Charles I had had a "cabinet-council" of his own creatures and tools, where everything was resolved on before being laid before the king's "cabinet-council". He declared he did not speak properly when in talking of events of Charles I's time he used the term "cabinet-council", for that was a term of much later date—wherein he was mistaken. He said that in those days the king had, besides parliament, no other council than what was still called the privy council. Of the privy council there was always a committee appointed to consider and have care of foreign affairs. The resolutions of that committee were not carried into execution until approved by the privy council. Then in that council sat great officers, such as the lord treasurer, the lord high admiral, and others, who by birth and quality as well as from the importance of their positions added dignity and weight to the council. Now those offices were in commission, and often granted to men without birth, quality, or character. This had much derogated from the authority of that assembly, and was, he thought, the chief cause of their power being now almost entirely usurped by what was called the cabinet council.[158]

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[153] Sir Stanier Porten to John Pownall, 30 November 1774: *Dartmouth MSS., H. M.C.*, 14th report, appendix, x. 235.

[154] Stormont to George III, 1 September 1781: *The Correspondence of King George the Third, from 1760 to December 1783* (ed. Sir John Fortescue, London, 1927-8), v. 271.

[155] "Minute," 24 April 1785: Add. MS. 28059, fos. 70, 71.

[156] "Spencer House Journals," 16 September 1689: Foxcroft, *Halifax*, ii. 236.

[157] *Parliamentary History*, xi, 772.

In 1748 Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, a member of the cabinet, long in government service, and one of the greatest legal authorities of the time, wrote to his colleague, the duke of Newcastle, explaining why he did not think it necessary to submit the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to the privy council:[159]

> For my own part, I am thoroughly satisfied, especially since all the Lords of the Cabinet, which is the Committee of Council for foreign Affairs, are of the Regency, & eleven of them were present, when the Treaty & the separate & secret Articles were considered, & gave an unreserved Approbation.

Towards the end of the reign of George II there was some writing against the oligarchy of noblemen and politicians who composed the cabinet and usurped the power of the king, symptomatic of a feeling that would support George III, a few years later, in his efforts to restore the power of the crown. In 1757 a pamphleteer wrote upon this subject at length, and in course of his narrative adverted to the reform of the council many years before and to the promise then made to have no foreign committee. He declared that in a well-regulated monarchy all matters of state should be reported to the crown, and after the pleasure of the sovereign was known, they should then, if needful, be put before the council board. He continued: "If such Regulations be wanting, and that foreign Committees act by private or partial Informations, they will be led into many fatal Errors or Mistakes, and it may also open a Door for partial Interests and Connections, which under the Conduct of an ambitious or aspiring Administration, may introduce a Kind of Oligarchy in the Administration of State Affairs, than which there is nothing more to be dreaded or avoided; for if the Crown can be shaded, and the Subject barred from Access to the Sovereign, it must of Course break in upon all the Principles of the Constitution."[160]

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[158] *Parliamentary History,* xi. 806, 807, 808.

[159] Hardwicke to Newcastle, 1 November 1748: Add. MS. 32717, fo. 249.

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[160] *The Fatal Consequences of the Want of System in the Conduct of Public Affairs* (London, 1757), pp. 36, 37.

# CHAPTER XV

## STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CABINET

SINCE the cabinet in origin was the committee of the privy council for foreign affairs, the membership, proceedure, and activities of the cabinet in earlier times are to be studied princpally in connection with that committee during the time when men spoke of the foreign committee rather than of the cabinet council. Suffice it to say, then, that the cabinet contained, perhaps, as many as twelve in the latter years of James I, when first it appeared; that about 1626 Lord Keeper Coventry gave a list of ten members as of "the last Committee for Forren Services"; that the all-important committee established at the beginning of the reign of Charles I contained five; that various lists in this reign written in the register of the privy council assign six or eight or more to the foreign committee; that there were apparently at first seven in the foreign committee set up when Charles II was received back in England; that there were nine in the "Committee of Forraine Affayres" established by Charles II as one of the new standing committees of the council in 1668; and that the "Comittee for Intelligence" constituted on the reform of the privy council in 1679 also contained nine members.

Meanwhile numerous incidental pieces of information about cabinet membership and attendance occur. In 1664 Pepys went to Whitehall, "the King being in his Cabinet Council". He was called in. "There were at this Council my Lord Chancellor, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Treasurer, the two Secretarys, and Sir G. Carteret [treasurer of the navy]."[1] Two years later he and three others went to Whitehall "to attend the King and Duke of York at the Cabinet". Presently they were called in to the Green Room, "where [were] the King, Duke of York [lord high admiral], Prince Rupert [joint admiral of the fleet], Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, Duke of Albemarle [joint admiral], G. Carteret, W. Coventry [commissioner of the navy], Morrice [secretary of state]".[2] In 1669, being called in to a meeting of the cabinet in the secretary's office in Whitehall, he was surprised to find the lord privy seal attending as a member.[3]

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[1] *Diary,* 9 November 1664.

Either the membership of the cabinet was presently restricted or else, as is probable enough, an inner group of the cabinet attracted the attention of outsiders then. The memoirs of James II, written, perhaps, about 1700, referring to the year 1672, say: "Of the King's Cabinet Councill were then the Duke of Buckingham, Duke of Lauderdale, Earle of Arlington, Lord Clifford, and L$^{d}$ Ashly Cooper"; and a marginal note adds: "These 5 call'd the Caball were now of the Cabinet Councill".[4] But apparently Prince Rupert is mentioned as a member of the cabinet shortly after.[5] In 1673, when the Duke of York was forced from his position, "the place of High Admirall of England is to be managed by Commissioners, which are all the Lords of the Cabinet Councell".[6] Other correspondents commenting on the change give the number of new commissioners, and hence of the cabinet council, as eleven or twelve: Prince Rupert, the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, the lord privy seal, the duke of Monmouth—captain of the horse guards, the duke of Lauderdale—secretary of state in Scotland, the duke of Buckingham—master of the horse, the duke of Ormonde—lord steward, the earl of Arlington—one of the secretaries, Sir George Carteret—vice-chamberlain, Mr. Seymour—the speaker, and Henry Coventry—the other secretary of state.[7]

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[2] *Diary,* 7 October 1666.

[3] *Ibid.,* 26 January 1668-9.

[4] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* i. 454.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 480.

[6] Robert Yard to Sir Joseph Williamson, 20 June 1673: *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson* (Camden Society, new series, viii), p. 47.

Party divisions were already beginning to make difficult the working of such a cabinet as the kings had been accustomed to have. In November Shaftesbury, the lord chancellor, was removed, but the Venetian ambassador wrote that no one anticipated any good result from this removal, since his colleagues who remained in the cabinet would thwart everything attempted.[8] Shortly after he wrote that the government was brought to such a pass that Charles called cabinet councils for the purpose of not listening to them, and that ministers held forth there so as not to be understood.[9] Actually there is a large gap for this period in the minutes of the committee of foreign affairs. During the summer and autumn of 1673 outsiders believed that the cabal was broken to pieces. In January 1674 one of Williamson's correspondents wrote that the king was displeased with the duke of Buckingham, and that he was no longer summoned to the cabinet.[10]

During the years that followed "cabinet" and "foreign committee" so far became terms of disrepute that when Charles found it necessary to yield to the opposition temporarily he promised not to have such a body in the future. In his reformed privy council he immediately established, however, a committee of intelligence. Since that committee contained some of his principal opponents it received less of the king's confidence than had the foreign committee before it. During this time the term cabinet was mostly avoided; but when, after a brief struggle, Charles began to win against his opponents, the committee of intelligence was purged of them, and soon again was known as the committee of foreign affairs. For a while possibly a group of particular confidants assisting the king were by some called the " cabinet ", but however that be, there seems no doubt that presently it was " the committee " or the foreign committee which men spoke of as the cabinet council.

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[7] Letters of Sir Robert Southwell, J. Rosse, and William Bridgeman to Williamson, 20, 21, 23 June 1673: *ibid.*, pp. 56, 57, 59.

[8] Despatch of Girolamo Alberti, 24 November 1673: Venetian Transcripts, xliv. 630.

[9] Despatch of 22 December 1673: *ibid.*, fo. 649.

[10] Letter of Sir Robert Southwell, 23 January 1673-4: *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson*, p. 131.

Charles II at first gave his confidence to the committee of intelligence as little as possible with respect to important matters. The author of the *Life of James II* afterwards wrote that about 1680 the frequent attendance of the French ambassador at court made him seem one of the king's cabinet council rather than a minister from abroad.[11] Charles soon got rid of his adversaries. In April 1680 a correspondent wrote: " Our present cabal of governors are all to pieces among themselves and they cannot agree who is wisest or most in favour. I believe the Lord Chancellor will not stay long in his station ".[12] Shaftesbury, Monmouth, Sunderland, Essex, and Temple were successively turned out. Sir Leoline Jenkins succeeded Coventry in February 1680, and the earl of Conway succeeded Sunderland in the other secretary's place in March of the next year. Meanwhile others were added.[13]

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[11] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* i. 602.

[12] Earl of Conway to Sir Edward Harley, 10 April 1680: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.,* 14th report, ii. 365.

[13] In February 1681 the Dutch ambassador wrote that in place of Sunderland, Essex, the earl of Salisbury, and Sir William Temple, lately in the king's secret council—" die nu in des Konings secreeten Raad

In January 1682 the membership of the cabinet or foreign committee was probably about nine: at least the following were ordered by the king to attend a meeting of "the Com̄ittee of Councill": [14]

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | William Sancroft |
| lord chancellor | earl of Nottingham |
| lord president | earl of Radnor |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Mulgrave |
| first lord of the treasury | Viscount Hyde |
| lord of the committee of trade and plantations | earl of Halifax |
| | Mr. Seymour |
| secretary of state | Sir Leoline Jenkins |
| secretary of state | earl of Conway |

In 1689 a committee of the house of lords examined among others Dr. John Tillotson, dean of St. Paul's, with respect to the death of Lord William Russell and the issuing of quo warrantos in 1683: "The Examinant saith, That, the Day after the Lord *Russell* died, he was commanded to appear at the Cabinet Council: which he did; and there the King, the Duke of *Yorke*, the Lord Keeper *North*, the Duke of *Ormond* [lord steward and lord lieutenant of Ireland], the Lord *Hallifax* [lord privy seal], the Lord *Rochester* [first lord of the treasury], and Sir *Leonile* [*sic*] *Jenkins* [secretary of state] were present".[15]

The lord keeper, Francis North, left certain memoranda concerning this period upon which Roger North af-

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geen sitplaetse meer en hebben"—had come the earl of Oxford, the earl of Chesterfield, the earl of Ailesbury. Van Citters to the states general, Westminster, 7 February 1681 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 FF, fo. 19. He may have been referring to the committee of intelligence or he may have had in mind some other group of confidants at this time.

[14] 22 January 1681-2: Shaftesbury Papers, $6^{B}$, no. 445.

[15] *Lords' Journals,* xiv. 378, Lord Russell was beheaded 21 July 1683.

terwards based his memoir. According to him the king's principal advisers were called "cabanet or caball".[16] North was summoned "to the Cabinett . . . he was taken in to the Most secret Recesses of the K Councells".[17] He describes "the posture of the Cabinett" for what must be the end of 1682 or the beginning of 1683:

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord president | earl of Radnor |
| lord privy seal | marquis of Halifax |
| secretary of state | Sir Leoline Jenkins |
| secretary of state | Lord Conway |
| first lord of the treasury | earl of Rochester |
| lord steward and lord lieutenant of Ireland | duke of Ormonde |
| commissioner of the treasury | Sidney Godolphin |

Seymour, he declares, had just withdrawn.[18] Various additions and changes followed. Sunderland was brought in again, 6 March 1683, and presently the lord chief justice—Jeffreys, while the duke of York was able to return to the duties of the lord admiral's office in May, 1684, and the earl of Middleton became one of the secretaries of state in September.

At the beginning of the reign of James II the principal ministers were [19]

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord treasurer | earl of Rochester |
| lord privy seal | earl of Clarendon |
| lord president | marquis of Halifax |
| lord chamberlain to the queen | Lord Godolphin |
| secretary of state | earl of Sunderland |
| secretary of state | earl of Middleton |

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[16] Memoranda Historica: Add. MS. 32520, fo. 253.

[17] *Ibid.*, fo. 251.

[18] Mda. Historica: Add. MS. 32523, fo. 36. North, *Lives of the Norths*, i. 300.

[19] Clarke, *Life of James the Second*, ii. 8.

as had, apparently, been the case at the end of the reign of Charles II, save that with the accession of the new sovereign there had been some change in the offices which these personages held. The earl of Rochester, first commissioner of the treasury until August 1684, had become lord president, in which office he was succeeded by Halifax when he himself became lord treasurer; Halifax had been lord privy seal; Godolphin had been first commissioner of the treasury in succession to Rochester. In January 1687 Lord Belasyse, who became first lord of the treasury, was likewise admitted.[20] In October of that year the duke of Beaufort received a paper from the hand of the king, "at his Cabinet Council, in Lord Sunderland's office": present were the lord chancellor, the lord president, Lord Middleton, Lord Dartmouth—admiral of the fleet, Lord Godolphin—commissioner of the treasury.[21] A French report, written about the end of this year, apparently, or the beginning of 1688, declared that the members of the cabinet council were: [22]

| | |
|---|---|
| Prince George | |
| lord chancellor | Lord Jeffreys |
| secretary of state | earl of Sunderland |
| lord privy seal | Lord Arundel |
| secretary of state | Lord Middleton |
| commissioner of the treasury | Lord Godolphin |
| lord steward | duke of Ormonde |
| commander of the fleet | Lord Dartmouth |

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[20] "Den Lord Bellasis is geadmitteert tot een lidt van Syne Majesteyts cabinet conseil, en daerin verleden Sondagh sessie genomen heeft." Van Citters to the states general, 31 January 1687 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 15.

[21] 26 October 1687: *Beaufort MSS., H. M. C.*, 12th report, ix. 91.

[22] Report, perhaps by Bonrepaux: Transcripts from Paris, xlviii. 139.

In advice to his son, written afterwards, James II said that " Cabinet Councells " should consist of seven: " two Secretarys of State, Secretary of War, of Admiralty, first Commissioner of Treasury, and two others ".[23]

After the dispossession of James there was much speculation as to who would compose William's cabinet. A certain one declared it was known that Bentinck was the principal favorite.[24] In August 1689 Luttrell wrote that the marquis of Halifax—lord privy seal, the marquis of Carmarthen—lord president, the earl of Portland—groom of the stole, and the two secretaries were said to be of the cabinet council.[25] In September William told Halifax that the earl of Monmouth—who was first commissioner of the treasury—" must bee in the Cabinet by his place ".[26] About household officers he was rather doubtful.[27] It was the opinion of a writer of foreign intelligence about this time that none of those who had been the principal favorites, such as Danby, Shrewsbury, and Halifax, were taking any important part, and that into what he called the cabinet—what, perhaps, an Englishman would have called the closet—came only Bentinck and the Dutch ambassadors.[28] According to Halifax, in January 1690 William " agreed the necessity of a cabinet Councill, but said hee did not know of men, who would speak freely before one another ".[29]

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[23] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* ii. 642.

[24] Letters of Richard Thompson to Henry Thompson, *Camden Miscellany,* viii (Camden Society, new series, xxxi), p. 4.

[25] Luttrell, i. 568.

[26] " Spencer House Journals ", 15 September 1689: Foxcroft, *Life of Halifax,* ii. 236.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] " Toutes les affaires d'importance étant faites dans le cabinet, où il n'entre que Bentinck et les ambassadeurs de Hollande, ce qui fait enrager tous les anglais." Letter from London, 17/27 October 1689: Grimblot, i. 236.

[29] " Spencer House Journals ", 23 January 1689-90: Foxcroft, ii. 244.

In June 1690 William went over into Ireland, leaving Mary as regent during his absence, she to take no real part in the administration, however. " In private ", she says, he " had told me, who he intended to leave here as my Cabinet Council ".[30] There were nine members:

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord president | marquis of Carmarthen |
| lord steward | earl of Devonshire |
| lord chamberlain | earl of Dorset |
| first lord of the admiralty | earl of Pembroke |
| secretary of state | earl of Nottingham |
| commander-in-chief | earl of Marlborough |
| earl of Monmouth | no great office, but recently first lord of the treasury |
| first lord of the treasury | Sir John Lowther |
| Admiral Russell | |

They were appointed " as a secret councill to her majestie ", according to Luttrell.[31] In August of that year Halifax says that Marlborough told him of " a scheme of Cabinet Councell "—one which he had, apparently, formed in his own mind: the manuscript is defective, but Marlborough—besides himself, probably—suggested Pembroke or Portland—one can only conjecture from the " P."—Halifax, the lord steward, the lord president, and the two secretaries.[32] In December the earl of Monmouth and Sir John Lowther were said to be removed from " the Cabinet Council " and Prince George and Godolphin taken in.[33] In reporting this another writer speaks of "the Cabinet or Council of Nine".[34]

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[30] Doebner, *Memoirs of Mary,* pp. 27, 28.

[31] Luttrell, ii. 51. Also *Diary of Clarendon, Correspondence of Henry Hyde,* ii. 316.

[32] Foxcroft, *Life of Halifax,* ii. 129.

In 1691, when William went to Holland "the Council for chief administration of affairs" which he left was said again to contain nine: Prince George, the marquis of Carmarthen, the earl of Pembroke, the earl of Marlborough, the duke of Bolton—who held no great office, Lord Godolphin—first lord of the treasury, Lord Sydney—secretary of state, Admiral Russell, and Sir John Lowther—commisisoner of the treasury.[35]

In April 1694 William held a cabinet council at Kensington attended by ten: the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, Rochester—without great office, Shrewsbury—secretary, Godolphin, Sydney—master general of the ordnance, Russell, and the other secretary—Trenchard.[36] In June, while the king was abroad, a "Cabinet Council at Whitehall" was attended by six: the lord keeper, the lord privy seal, the duke of Devonshire—lord steward, the duke of Shrewsbury, the marquis of Normanby—with no great office, and Secretary Trenchard.[37]

The principal officers trusted by the king and forming his cabinet council at the time were given charge of administration during his absences from England while Mary lived, and after her death in 1694 the government was on seven occasions left in charge of lords justices whom William appointed. It will hereafter be shown that lords justices were several times appointed by

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[33] Newsletter, London, 16 December 1690: *Le Fleming MSS., H. M. C.*, 12th report, appendix, vii. 307.

[34] Edward Harley to Abigail Harley, 16 December 1690: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.*, 14th report, ii. 455.

[35] Newsletter: *Le Fleming MSS.*, p. 310.

[36] 22 April 1694: *Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House*, ii, part i. 63, 82.

[37] 21 June 1694: *ibid.*, p. 85.

George I and by George II when they returned to Hanover, and on those occasions, as in the years when William was reigning alone, the lords justices were the members of the king's cabinet council given a commission to be a collective regency for governing the realm while the king was away. So, the lists of lords justices, like the councils appointed to assist Mary, give a great deal of information as to the constitution of the cabinet in various years.[38]

Evidently there was increasing pressure on the part of ambitious politicians to be admitted to the cabinet and increasing tendency for the cabinet council to enlarge. In 1701 Sunderland advising Somers gave a list of the officers who, he thought, should be of the cabinet council: the archbishop, the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, the lord steward, the lord chamberlain, the first lord of the treasury, the two secretaries of state, and the lord lieutenant of Ireland when in England. To these ten, if the king would have more, might be added the first lord of the admiralty and the master of the ordnance. "If these two are excluded, no one can take it ill, if he be not admitted". They might, indeed, be summoned only when anything relating to their charge was debated. In general, the advice of Sunderland was: "None to be of the Cabinet Council, but who have, in some sort, a right to enter there by their employment".[39]

In 1704 Ezechiel Spanheim, the Prussian envoy, writing an account of the English court, said that the cabinet council contained twelve members:[40]

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[38] See *below,* vol. ii. In 1698 Secretary Vernon wrote: "I hear my Lord Marlborough is to be of the Cabinet Council; he will be a very fit man to be one of the Lords Justices". Letter to the duke of Shrewsbury, 11 June 1698: *Vernon Letters,* ii. 104.

[39] Hardwicke, *Miscellaneous State Papers,* ii. 461.

[40] Reprinted in *English Historical Review,* ii. 767, (October, 1887).

The archbishop of Canterbury
    lord chancellor
    lord treasurer
    lord president
    lord privy seal
    master [treasurer?] of the household
    master of the horse
    duke of Marlborough—when in England
    lord lieutenant of Ireland—when in England
    earl of Rochester, previous lord lieutenant
    secretary of state
    secretary of state

About 1704 De Foe advised Harley to reduce the cabinet: he believed that the privy council should take an active part in affairs, in which case the queen would need no more than a cabinet composed of her treasurer and one secretary of state.[41] In 1710 the writer of a pamphlet suggested that the ministry of Great Britain—he did not speak of " cabinet "—should be composed of the chancellor of the exchequer, the lord chamberlain, the lord treasurer, the secretaries of state, and, perhaps, others, such as a representative of the navy.[42]

According to one of the contemporaries who described Guiscard's attempt upon Harley, the cabinet contained eleven members in 1711. On this occasion " the Lords of the Cabinet Council " who met at St. John's office at the Cockpit were:

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[41] Burghley Papers: British Museum, Lansdowne MS. xcviii. 223-246, reprinted in *English Historical Review*, xxii, 130-143 (January 1907).

[42] *An Essay towards the History of the Last Ministry and Parliament*, etc. [1710], pp. 26 ff.

| | |
|---|---|
| The lord president | earl of Rochester |
| lord keeper | Sir Simon, later Lord Harcourt |
| lord lieutenant of Ireland | duke of Ormonde |
| lord privy seal | duke of Newcastle |
| lord steward | duke of Buckinghamshire |
| secretary for Scotland | duke of Queensberry |
| first lord of the treasury | Earl Poulet |
| secretary of state | Henry St. John |
| secretary of state | earl of Dartmouth |

"The Duke of Shrewsbury [lord chamberlain] and the Archbishop were the only members of the Cabinet that were wanting, the former entertained all the foreign ministers that day, and the Archbishop was sick".[43]

Next year the Duc d'Aumont reported the number as eleven:[44]

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | Thomas Tenison |
| lord chancellor | Lord Harcourt |
| lord treasurer | earl of Oxford |
| lord president | duke of Buckinghamshire |
| lord privy seal | bishop of London |
| lord lieutenant of Ireland | duke of Ormonde |
| lord steward | Earl Poulet |
| lord chamberlain | duke of Kent |
| master of the horse | duke of Somerset |
| secretary of state | earl of Dartmouth |
| secretary of state | Viscount Bolingbroke |

[43] ? Harley to Abigail Harley, 22 March 1710-11: *Portland MSS., H.M.C.,* 15th report, appendix, iv. 669.

[44] Quoted in Salomon, *Geschichte des Letzten Ministeriums Königin Annas,* pp. 352-6.

Political alterations brought changes with respect to individuals. In 1714, after the accession of George I, a "List of the Cabinet Councell" includes fifteen:[45]

| | |
|---|---|
| The archbishop of Canterbury | Thomas Tenison |
| lord chancellor | Lord Cowper |
| [lord treasurer, *sic*] | |
| lord chamberlain | duke of Shrewsbury |
| lord president | earl of Nottingham |
| lord privy seal | marquis of Wharton |
| lord steward | duke of Devonshire |
| master of the horse | duke of Somerset |
| captain general | duke of Marlborough |
| first lord of the admiralty | earl of Orford |
| lord lieutenant of Ireland | earl of Sunderland |
| first lord of the treasury | earl of Halifax |
| secretary of state | Lord Townshend |
| Lord Somers | holding no great office |
| secretary for Scotland | Duke of Montrose |
| secretary of state | James Stanhope |

Shrewsbury, who was lord chamberlain, had ceased to be lord treasurer on the arrival of George I in England, when the treasury was put in commission. Next year Joseph Addison wrote: "We expect every day to hear of Mr. Walpole's being at the head of the Treasury and a member of the Cabinet".[46]

The cabinet was altogether the king's cabinet, and membership came through the sovereign alone. In 1704 Spanheim wrote that only those came to the cabinet who were called by the queen.[47] In 1692, before the king went away, he took Sir Edward Seymour by the hand and led him to the queen, recommending him as a fit person from whom her majesty might take advice in his own absence. Some days later it was noted that "sir Edward Seymour is of the cabinet councill".[48] Membership in the privy council was prerequisite, in that technically though informally—for standing committees of the council with limited membership were generally not now appointed—the cabinet was a committee of the privy council. In 1699 James Vernon, secretary of state, wrote to a correspondent: "I gave you an account . . . of my Lord Jersey's arrival, he will now acquaint you himself that he received the Seals on Saturday, and was sworn yesterday, and took his place at the Cabinet Council".[49]

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[45] S. P. D., George I, i. 261.

[46] Letter to Archbishop King, 4 October 1715: *H. M. C.*, 2d report, appendix, p. 250.

There was much thought and much advice about who should be included in this group. "A Cabinet Counsellor a man of business", was the general rule that Halifax laid down.[50] James II thought the cabinet should contain seven: the two secretaries, the heads of the war, admiralty, and treasury departments, and two others.[51] This had been about the size of his cabinets, but he had also made much use of smaller, more secret bodies. The cabinets of William contained nine or more, but he would willingly have entrusted his affairs to a smaller number. In 1694 he wrote to Shrewsbury that it would be well to have business on particular occasions dealt with "solely by the great officers of the crown, namely, the lord keeper, the lord president, the lord privy seal, and the two secretaries of state ".[52]

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[47] "Il n'intervient dailleurs à ce Conseil, que les Ministres, qui y sont appellés par la Reine." *English Historical Review,* ii. 767.

[48] Luttrell, ii. 375, 390.

[49] Letter to Matthew Prior, 15/25 May 1699: *H.M.C., Bath MSS.,* iii. 344, 345.

[50] "Political Thoughts and Reflections", Foxcroft, ii. 495.

[51] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* ii. 642.

It was evident enough that the principal officials must be members of the king's principal council, but with growth of business and increasing differentiation and organization of departments, inclusion of a larger number seemed necessary, while it was always difficult to exclude the great traditional offices of the crown, held generally by prominent leaders and politicians. In 1689 William was certain that the first lord of the treasury should be in the cabinet. At the same time he said that if the lord steward were included the lord chamberlain must be also.[53] In 1707 Lord Chancellor Cowper wrote to the duke of Newcastle—lord privy seal, that the duke of Devonshire—recently made lord steward—was not yet called to the cabinet. " The reason given is that the Queen may let it be seen that must not be taken as inherent to the office ".[54] In 1710 Shrewsbury wrote to Harley that in his opinion Harley should be at the head of the treasury, " because you then come naturally into the Cabinet Council, where you are so much wanted ".[55] In 1712 St. John told the earl of Strafford that " the employment of First Commissioner of the Admiralty brings your Lordship into Cabinet ", but that if he had received the office of master of the ordnance he could not have entered, " without making a precedent for enlarging the Cabinet, which her Majesty had much rather confine than extend ".[56]

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[52] Letter to the duke of Shrewsbury, 22 May/1 June 1694: Coxe, *Correspondence of Shrewsbury*, p. 38.

[53] " Spencer House Journals ", 15 September 1689: Foxcroft, ii. 236.

[54] Letter of 19 September 1707: *Portland MSS., H.M.C.*, 13th report, appendix, ii. 200.

[55] Letter of 22 July 1710: *H.M.C., Bath MSS.*, i. 198.

[56] Letter of 27 August 1712: Bolingbroke, *Letters*, iii. 27.

The princes of the blood were at first members of the cabinet as a matter of course. The duke of York and Prince Rupert had both been members of the committee of foreign affairs established in 1668.[57] Prince Rupert was not named to the committee of intelligence in 1679, but he heads the list in the register of that committee.[58] Though at times slights and disrespects were shown to James, duke of York, by some of the ministers of Charles II, "yet his R. H. never fail'd to join with them at the Cabinet Councill".[59]

Generally the membership of the cabinet was exactly determined and clearly understood by those who had part in affairs. In 1711 St. John wrote to the queen in respect of negotiations then pending, that in addition to Mr. Prior, "the rest of the Plenipotentiarys are all those who have the honour to sit in y^r^ Majesty's Cabinet Council".[60] "You have the list of the L^ds^ of the Cabinet Councill", wrote one of the under-secretaries to the other in 1717.[61]

As the sovereign chose the members of the cabinet, so he dismissed them at pleasure, tenure and possession of their offices being in theory entirely at his will. In 1704 Anne was urged "to dismiss the dukes of Somerset and Devonshire from the cabinet council".[62] In 1713 the earl of Nottingham hoped to be appointed lord president or else lord privy seal, but was disappointed in both cases when the offices were filled, by which, says Swift, "he plainly saw, that the queen was determined against giving him any opportunity of directing in affairs, or displaying his eloquence in the cabinet council ".[63] Yet in 1679 Charles II had felt himself compelled to admit Shaftesbury and other adversaries of the court not only into the privy council but into the committee of intelligence then established. After 1688, with evidence of the increasing power of parliament over the executive constantly more apparent, even though the theory remained that the cabinet was the sovereign's council and that members were admitted and held their position solely at the sovereign's will, more and more was the crown apt to be constrained to admit to the cabinet those whom it would not itself have chosen and to displace others whom it would have retained. In 1708 James Vernon wrote to to the duke of Shrewsbury: " Mr. Secretary Harley has been the public theme these two or three days. It seems the dissatisfaction rises so high between him and the ministers, that both my Lord Treasurer and Duke of Marlborough acquainted her Majesty on Saturday, that they could not serve any longer with him, and his removal being in suspense, they forebore coming to the cabinet council on Sunday. Her Majesty sent for the Duke of Marlborough to Kensington on Monday morning, and at his coming back to the House of Lords it was soon spread abroad, that the seals would be sent for, which I suppose is done to-day ".[64]

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[57] P. C. R., lx, 12 February 1667-8.

[58] Add. MS. 15643, fo. 1.

[59] Clarke, *Life of James the Second*, i. 436.

[60] Letter of 20 September 1711: S. P. D., Anne, xvi.

[61] Tilson to Delafaye, 15 August 1717: S. P. D., George I, ix.

[62] Burnet, v. 139.

Cabinet meetings were held at various times and in various places. Sometimes there was considerable regularity. In the midst of great variety, however, often no rule can be deduced save exigency of business and desire of the sovereign or of the principal ministers of the council.

At times a great many of the meetings were in the office of the senior secretary of state. In 1669 Pepys says that he was summoned to attend a meeting of the "Cabinet" in the secretary's office at Whitehall—the business was victualling a fleet to be sent against the Algerines.[65] In 1682 the Dutch representatives reported that Charles II was accustomed to hold his secret council in the room of Secretary Jenkins.[66] Writing many years later the earl of Ailesbury said that in 1683 Charles II ordered "to come to the Secretaries the usual hour of Cabinet Council".[67] In 1687 James II was at a cabinet meeting in Lord Sunderland's Office.[68] About the same time the Spanish ambassador met certain of the principal ministers: "they were in the Office of the first Sec$^y$ of State in the Palace, where the late King held his Cabinet Councils".[69] Next year a correspondent wrote: "I am now in Lord Sunderland's office, where a Cabinet Council is holding, the King in it; came from Windsor this evening on purpose".[70] Three years later Lord Dartmouth was taken "to my Lord Nottingham's office, where I was let in to the Cabinet Councell roome".[71] Afterwards the earl of Ailesbury wrote that about the end of March 1696 he went to the office of the secretary of state. He says: "The Duke of Shrewsbury would not sign the warrant, nor was he present at the office, although the

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[63] *History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, Prose Works*, x. 35.

[64] Letter of 10 February 1707-8: *Vernon Letters*, iii. 343, 344.

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[65] *Diary,* 26 January 1668-9.

[66] A conference was held "in het appartment van den heer Jenkins in de camer daer de Coming zyn secreten raedt is gewoon te houden": secret despatch of Van Citters and Van Beuningen to the greffier of the states general, Westminster, 6/17 [*sic*] February 1682: Add. MS. 17677 TTT, fo. 22.

[67] *Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury,* (Roxburghe Club, 1890), i. 82.

[68] 26 October 1687: *Beaufort MSS., H. M. C.,* 12 report, appendix, ix. 91.

[69] Don Pedro Ronquillo to the king of Spain, London, 10 November 1687 (N.S.): Mackintosh Papers, Add. MS. 34502, fo. 127.

[70] Letter to John Ellis, London, 18 September 1688: *Ellis Correspondence,* ii. 192.

[71] "Memorandums", 14 July 1691: *Dartmouth MSS., H. M. C.,* 11th report, v. 287.

Cabinet Council was kept at his, as First Secretary ".[72] In 1703 Secretary Nottingham asked certain officials to attend " the Cabinet Council " at his office that evening.[73]

Cabinets met in various other places, as was convenient, especially at the palace where the sovereign was staying. In 1666, on a Thursday, Charles II went to Worcester House—the residence of the lord chancellor, and stayed there " at a Cabinet Council ".[74] That year the king and " Cabinet " met in the Green Chamber in Whitehall.[75] Next year Pepys was called in " to the King and Cabinet " meeting at the lord treasurer's.[76] In 1669 there was a " Cabinet Council " at Wallingford House.[77] In 1681 the king is said to have resolved on the dissolution of parliament in " a Cabinet Council " held at Merton College.[78] In 1698 there was a meeting of some of " the Lords of the Cabinet " at the lodgings of the archbishop of Canterbury in the Cockpit.[79]

In the latter part of the period during which the king continued to attend cabinet councils many meetings of the cabinet were held in the royal palaces, until in the latter years of Anne and the earlier years of George I almost all meetings specifically denominated " cabinet " were held there. " Home and eat something ", wrote Pepys in 1664, " and then shifted myself, and to White Hall, and there the King being in his Cabinet Council . . . I was called in ".[80] In 1674 the Venetian ambassador reported a meeting of the cabinet council at Hampton Court.[81] In 1691 Secretary Hedges wrote that "the Cabinett Councill" was to meet that evening at Kensington.[82] In 1701 there was "a Cabinet Councill" at Kensington.[83] Later that year there was another at Hampton Court.[84] In 1702 Secretary Vernon let the recorder of London know that the queen had appointed a cabinet council to meet at St. James the next evening.[85] In 1704, apparently, the lord treasurer, Godolphin, wrote to Secretary Nottingham: "The Queen has commanded mee to Lett yo$^r$ L$^p$ know, she w$^d$ have the Lords of the Cabinett Councill summoned to attend her tomorrow at S$^t$ James's before one".[86] Next year Godolphin informed Harley that Anne would have "the Cabinet Council" the next evening at Kensington and on Friday morning at St. James's.[87] In 1708 Sunderland wrote to Newcastle to remind him of the cabinet council at Kensington that evening.[88] In 1710 Sunderland asked the sheriffs of London and Middlesex to attend a cabinet council to meet at St. James's.[89] In 1714 Bollingbroke summoned the attorney general "to Attend the Queen this Evening at S$^t$ James's, where a Cabinet Councill is appointed to meet".[90]

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[72] *Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury,* ii. 374.

[73] Letter to the prince's council, 30 April 1703: S. P. D. E. B., ccix. 33.

[74] Sir Paul Neile to Henry Slingesby, 17 March 1665-6: *Graham MSS., H. M. C.,* 6th report, appendix, p. 338.

[75] Pepys, *Diary,* 26 August 1666; also 7 October 1666.

[76] *Ibid.,* 24 February 1666-7.

[77] Newsletter, 27 September 1669: *Le Fleming MSS., H. M. C.,* 12th report, appendix, vii. 66.

[78] *Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury,* i. 56.

[79] James Vernon to the duke of Shrewsbury, 8 April 1698: *Vernon Letters,* ii. 37.

[80] *Diary,* 9 November 1664.

As to the time of cabinet meetings and the number of such meetings it is impossible to discover any rule, save that perhaps in ordinary course at least one cabinet a week would be held, that the most usual day for meeting was Sunday, and frequently the time was in the evening. Additional meetings were either arranged or called by special summons, while sometimes for considerable intervals no cabinet councils were held. All in all, there were cabinets on any day in the week, morning or evening, at almost any hour.

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[81] Despatch of Girolamo Alberti, 15 June 1674 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliv, part ii. 44.

[82] Letter to Sir Charles Hedges, 30 November 1691: S. P. D. E. B., cciv. 66.

[83] James Vernon to the lords of the admiralty, 6 May 1701: *ibid.*, cii. 83.

[84] James Vernon to the earl of Rochester, 2 December 1701: *Correspondence of Henry Hyde*, ii. 427.

[85] S. P. D. E. B., cii, 4 April 1702.

[86] Undated letter: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 402.

[87] Letter of 10 October (?) 1705: *H. M. C., Bath MSS.*, i. 78.

[88] Letter of May (?) 1708: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.*, 13th report, appendix, ii. 204.

[89] Letter of 2 March 1709-10: S. P. D. E. B., cviii.

[90] Letter of 12 April 1714: *ibid.*, cxvi.

The student notices many meetings of the committee of foreign affairs held on Sundays. So with the "cabinet". "At the request of the Duke of York, the King held a Cabinet Council last Sunday", says the Venetian ambassador in 1673.[91] In 1679 "last Sunday at the Cabinet Council" the lord treasurer prevailed on the king to accept his white staff.[92] Writing of the years that followed, Roger North stated that "the cabinet council usually sat on Sunday evening".[93] In 1682 the Dutch ambassador said that recently no council but the Sunday cabinet at Windsor had been held.[94] On a Sunday in 1687 the bishop of Chester was told to deliver his address after the rising of the cabinet council.[95] The French report upon England, written about the beginning of 1688, declared that generally the cabinet council met each Sunday.[96] In 1696 a paper sent to Secretary Trumbull is endorsed with the memorandum: "At Kensington at the Cabinet on Sunday evening . . . I shewed Lord Portland this paper".[97] That same year order was given to summon the cabinet council "for Sunday night at the vsuall hour".[98] "I suppose they will be at the Cabinet Councill on Sonday", wrote Secretary Vernon to the lord chief justice in 1699.[99] A little later he said a letter had been laid before the king the preceding Sunday at the cabinet council.[100] In 1701 Vernon wrote to the lords of the admiralty that the king wished to be informed twice a week at least how the manning of the fleet proceeded, that he would receive through the secretary account thereof each Wednesday, let the admiralty commissioners attend the king "on Sundays at the Cabinet Councill" with what further information they had.[101] Some weeks afterward he wrote that business was to be brought before the king at the cabinet council on Sunday.[102] In 1703 Nottingham ordered a certain one to attend the cabinet on Sunday.[103] In May the secretary informed the prince's council that the queen had appointed "that a Cabinet Councill shall be held every Sunday in the afternoon during her stay at Windsor".[104] Next year Spanheim reported that there were usually few cabinet councils in her presence except on Sunday evenings.[105] In 1713 Bolingbroke wrote to

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[91] Despatch of Alberti, 17 November 1673 (N.S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliv. 626.

[92] Colonel Edward Cooke to the duke of Ormonde, London, 18 March 1678-9: *H. M. C., Ormonde MSS.*, new series, iv. 359.

[93] *Lives of the Norths*, i. 321.

[94] "Geen raat als die van de cabinet des Sondaeghs tot Winsor sal werden gehouden." Van Beuningen to the states general, 12 May 1682 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 FF, fo. 219.

[95] 29 May 1687: *The Diary of Dr. Thomas Cartwright* (Camden Society, xxii), p. 57.

[96] "Outre ce Conseil Privé, il s'en tient ordinairement un autre tous les dimanches, en présence du roy d'Angleterre. On l'appelle le Conseil du Cabinet." Transcripts from Paris, xlviii. 139.

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[97] *H.M.C., Downshire MSS.,* I, ii. 625.

[98] The secretary of state to John Ellis, 24 December 1696: Add. MS. 28895, fo. 66.

[99] Letter of 30 March 1699: S.P.D.E.B., ci. 4.

[100] Secretary Vernon to Mr. Hartop, 11 April 1699: *ibid.,* fo. 12.

[101] Letter of 3 March 1700-1: *ibid.,* cii.

[102] James Vernon to William Aglionby, 17 April 1701: *Downshire MSS.,* I. ii. 802.

[103] Letter to Blathwayt, 5 March 1702-3: S.P.D.E.B., civ. 222.

[104] Nottingham to the prince's council, 21 May 1703: *ibid.,* ccix. 58.

[105] "Il est vray, et surtout durant le séjour qu'Elle fait à Windsor, que hors les cas, qui surviennent à la traverse, il ne se tient gueres de Conseil de Cabinet devant Elle, que les Dimanches au soir. Il y a mesme

Anne: " I humbly presume your Majesty would have the Cabinet, as usual, on Sunday ".[106]

It is not certain that Sunday was always regarded as the usual cabinet time, and undoubtedly many meetings were held on the other days of the week. In 1671 the Venetian ambassador refers to a cabinet on Thursday.[107] It may be added that there were meetings of the committee of foreign affairs at Windsor on the Sunday preceding and the Sunday after.[108] In 1688 the Dutch ambassador records a cabinet on Friday.[109] Shortly after he speaks of another on Wednesday evening.[110] A little later still he mentions another on Thursday.[111] In 1691 Secretary Sydney wrote that the cabinet council was to meet that evening—which was Monday.[112] A few days later Nottingham, the other secretary, told the attorney general that William wished various legal authorities to be ready to report upon whether the capitulation of Limerick was in accord with the laws of England, the report to be made the next Friday, when the cabinet would meet in the king's presence at Kensington.[113] Next year he wrote to the attorney general asking him to

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quelque fois des Dimanches, que par le retard des ordinaires de delà la mer, ou autre raison, qu'il ne s'en tient mesme point au dit jour." *English Historical Review,* ii. 766, 767.

[106] Letter of 20 September 1713: Bolingbroke, *Letters,* iv. 294.

[107] " Yesterday the King came to London to attend a cabinet-council." Despatch of Alberti, 17 July 1671 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xlii. 108.

[108] S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi, 2, 9 July 1671.

[109] " Desen morgen was het cabinet conseil vergadert." Van Citters to the states general, 20 February 1688 (N. S.): Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 331.

[110] Letter of 27 February 1688 (N. S.): *ibid.,* fo. 343.

[111] " Gisteren soo ick hoor was het cabinet conseil vergadert." Letter of 30 April 1688 (N. S.): *ibid.,* fo. 394.

[112] Letter to Sir Charles Hedges, 30 November 1691: S. P. D. E. B., cciv. 66.

[113] Letter of 1 December 1691: *ibid.,* xcviii. 364.

attend the queen at the cabinet council the next day—which was Tuesday.[114] In 1699 Secretary Vernon wrote to the recorder of London that the king had appointed the cabinet council to meet on Monday evening, after the privy council was up.[115] Two years later he informed the commissioners of the admiralty that the king wished them to attend him at a cabinet to be held the next Wednesday at Kensington at eight o'clock in the evening.[116]

In 1702 he wrote to the duke of Ormonde: " The Queen desires to speak with Your Grace at the Cabinet Councill, which is appointed to meet on Wednesday next at five in the Afternoon at S^t^ James's ".[117] A little later Secretary Nottingham bade the commissioners for sick and wounded and for the exchange of prisoners to attend the cabinet the next Tuesday at ten o'clock in the morning.[118] On a Tuesday in 1702 Godolphin told Nottingham that the queen had just said she would have a cabinet council that night.[119] In 1704 one of the secretaries wrote to the other that the queen would have " the lords of the Cab. Councill " summoned to attend her at half past ten the next morning—which was Tuesday.[120] Two years later Secretary Hedges informed the envoy from Portugal that her majesty had ordered the council of the cabinet to meet the next day—Friday—at eleven in the morning.[121] In 1711 the earl of Strafford heard that " there was a long cabinet Council last night [Thursday], the result of wch you'll know soon ".[122] Next year St. John wrote of

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[114] Letter of 6 June 1692: *ibid.*, xcviii.

[115] Letter of 21 October 1699: *ibid.*, ci. 68.

[116] Letter of 6 May 1701: *ibid.*, cii. 83.

[117] Letter of 23 March 1701-2: S. P. D. E. B., cii.

[118] Letter of 27 June 1702: *ibid.*, civ. 61.

[119] Letter of 3 November 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 337.

[120] Hedges to Nottingham, 6 March 1703-4: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 380.

[121] Letter of 14 November 1706: S. P. D. E. B., cv, part ii. 144.

[122] Peter Wentworth to the earl of Strafford, 28 December 1711: *Wentworth Papers*, p. 233.

"the Cabinet Council, which sits on Thursday".[123] Shortly after he mentioned her majesty's intention "to summon a cabinet on Thursday".[124] In 1712 the Duc d'Aumont wrote that cabinet councils were held in the presence of the queen only on Monday evenings, unless something of importance arose in the meantime.[125] In 1716 there was a cabinet council on Monday.[126] During the stay of the prince at Hampton Court that summer Thursday was the regular day appointed for cabinet meetings.[127]

To arrive at any correct estimate of the number of cabinet meetings or of the frequency of meetings at any period it would be necessary to some extent to add the number of recorded meetings of the committee of foreign affairs, of "the committee", or of "the lords of the committee of council" to the meetings recorded with the designation "cabinet council", at the same time making allowance for duplication through allusion to the same meeting by different ones with diverse designations. Generally nothing more than rough approximation is to be maintained, save for such periods as those in which registers of minutes survive, as in the case—though very incompletely—for the committee of foreign affairs during several years prior to 1679, and during a briefer space for the committee of intelligence appointed that year. For the most part no more is possible than rough approximation and conjecture, but probably, as a rule, there was an average of one or two cabinet meetings a week through the year, with more on occasion, and at other times less.

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[123] Letter to the lords plenipotentiaries, 4 March 1711-12: Bolingbroke, *Letters*, ii. 201.

[124] Letter to the lord privy seal, 22 April 1712: *ibid.*, ii. 272.

[125] Salomon, *Geschichte des Letzten Ministeriums Königin Annas*, p. 356, note.

[126] Methuen to Stanhope, 16 July 1716: S. P. D. E. B., cclxvii.

[127] Methuen to Stanhope, 7 August 1716: *ibid.*

In 1673 one of Sir Joseph Williamson's correspondents wrote that either because of the illness of the lord treasurer or because the "Cabinett" was really broken to pieces it was observed by all "th$^{t}$ of late wee haue very few meetings. seldome now aboue once in a Weeke", upon which the coffee drinkers were making very idle reflections, as that the king did not care to foment any faction.[128] In 1704 Spanheim wrote that ordinarily meetings of the cabinet were more frequent during the time when a parliament was in session.[129] Evidently certain regular meetings of the cabinet council were expected. It would seem that as a rule such were on Sunday, whether in the morning or the evening; but sometimes they are mentioned as of Monday, or of Thursday. In 1683 Charles II ordered Monmouth to come to the office of the secretary of state "the usual hour of Cabinet Council".[130] In 1702 a certain one said: "I haue writ to my Lord Jarssey to call for the petition next Cabenett Counsell day"—though this doubtless would refer to an extraordinary as well as to a usual meeting.[131] In 1705 Secretary Hedges wrote: "there is no Cabinet to night".[132]

Additional meetings of the cabinet were particularly arranged and changes in time of meeting announced by special summons. In 1702 one of the under-secretaries wrote to another: "My Lord would haue you send out a Summons to the Cabinett Councill to attend the Queen at Windsor on Sunday in the afternoon. and not in the morning, the next Sunday being a Sacrament day".[133] Two years later the earl of Somerset wrote to Nottingham that he thought there had not been sufficient notice given for "a Councell" to be held that evening: "therefore I doe think it may doe as well, to haue a great Councell at six to morrow, & the Cabinett to bee putt off, till munday either at eleven in the morning, or at six in Evening, or to haue the Cabinett to be just as Her majesty doe come in from chaple, there beeing little buisness but what may bee putt off for one day, & then these affaires of the Instructions &c: may soone bee dispatch'd".[134] In 1711 when an express arrived one night bringing news of the emperor's death, Anne resolved to call an extraordinary cabinet the next evening.[135] In 1712 the queen wrote from Windsor to the earl of Oxford: "I have heard soe much of the waters being higher than ever, that I can't help writting tonight to desire you would not com any time this week unless there should be occasion for a Cabinet Council".[136]

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[128] Henry Ball to Williamson, Whitehall, 8 August 1673: S.P.D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part ii.

[129] *English Historical Review,* ii. 767.

[130] *Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury,* i. 82.

[131] F. Sheldon to John Ellis, 21 June 1702: Add. MS. 28888, fo. 370.

[132] Letter to M. Vrijbergue, 27 February 1704-5: S.P.D.E.B., cv. 199.

About the length of meetings there is little information. In June 1673 "the Cabinett" sat for four hours one morning, and held another meeting that evening.[137] In 1678 "the kinge sat in the cabinet councill till nyne".[138] According to a newsletter of 1691 a meeting lasted three hours.[139]

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[133] R. Warre to William Aglionby, 31 July 1702: S. P. D., Anne, i. 63.

[134] Undated letter, probably February 1703-4: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 363.

[135] Shrewsbury to Harley, 17 April 1711: *H. M. C., Bath MSS.,* i. 200 201.

[136] Letter of 2 December 1712: *ibid.,* p. 224.

[137] Ball to Williamson, 27 June 1673: S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part i. 27.

[138] E. Murray to the duke of Lauderdale, 13 April 1678: *Lauderdale Papers,* iii (Camden Society, new series, xxxviii), p. 111.

[139] Newsletter of 14/24 August 1691: *Denbigh MSS., H.M.C.,* 8th report, appendix, p. 566.

The cabinet council was the king's particular confidential council for managing his important concerns. It has often been assumed that always the sovereign was present at cabinet meetings, until George I began the practice of ceasing to attend. This was by no means the case. Generally in the seventeenth century and in the earlier part of the eighteenth the sovereign did preside at such meetings, but there were many occasions in the time of Charles II when the king was not present at a committee of foreign affairs, and there remain minutes of a considerable number of meetings of " the committee of council " without either William or Mary. Even if the generalization were based solely upon instances where the meeting is called " cabinet council " by the contemporary who has left the allusion or the record, it is not certain that no meetings of the cabinet were held without the monarch. There can be no doubt, however, that until about 1717 the sovereign was very frequently present at such meetings.

In 1683 a correspondent of Lord Preston mentions one whom he took " to the secretary's who desired me to bring him before the King in the cabinet council next day ".[140] In 1688 James II at the cabinet gave express directions to Pepys to inform Lord Dartmouth of the flight of the Princess Anne from Whitehall.[141] In 1690 the marquis of Camarthan informed William that " Her Ma$^{tie}$ is very diligent att Cabinet Councills ".[142] Next year a cabinet was to attend the king, where a report of the attorney general would be considered.[143] In 1692 Nottingham laid before the king at the cabinet council a letter, and received his majesty's command thereupon.[144] A little later a letter was read " to the Queen at the Cabinett Councill ".[145] A few days after Nottingham asked the attorney general to attend the queen the next day at the cabinet.[146] On another occasion a matter was decided by the queen in a " cabinet council ".[147] " The King resolv'd at the Cabinet Councill before he went into Holland, to take off the suspension of the Bishop of Meath ", Nottingham wrote to the lord lieutenant of Ireland.[148] In 1693 the commissioners of the admiralty sent a memorial to Secretary Trenchard, wishing him to lay it before the queen at the cabinet as soon as he could.[149] In 1698 a report upon a petition was given to William at a meeting of the cabinet.[150] Next year such a report was to be laid before the king the next Sunday " at the Cabinet Councill ".[151] In 1701 Vernon wrote to a certain one that he would present a letter to the king at the cabinet as he had presented a former letter.[152] A little later he informed the admiralty commissioners that the king wished them to attend him at a cabinet to be held next Wednesday evening.[153]

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[140] T. Deanes to Lord Preston, Whitehall, 29 February 1682-3: *Graham MSS., H. M. C.,* 7th report, appendix, p. 362.

[141] Pepys to Dartmouth, 26 November 1688: *Dartmouth MSS., H. M. C.,* 11th report, appendix, v. 214.

[142] Letter of 23 June 1690: S. P. D., King William's Chest, vii. 61.

[143] S. P. D. E. B., xcviii, 1 December 1691.

In March 1702 Vernon wrote to the duke of Ormonde that the queen wished to speak with him " at the Cabinet Councill " appointed for the next Wednesday evening at

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[144] Nottingham to the lords commissioners of the treasury, 9 January 1691-2: *ibid.*, fo. 371.

[145] *Ibid.*, 24 May 1692.

[146] *Ibid.*, 6 June 1692.

[147] Luttrell, ii. 520.

[148] Letter of 1 September 1692: S. P., Ireland, Entry Books, i. 349.

[149] Letter of 6 May 1693: S. P. D., Naval, ii. 456.

[150] Secretary Vernon to Matthew Prior, 7/17 April 1698: *Bath MSS.*, iii. 206.

[151] Secretary Vernon to Mr. Common Serjeant, 17 March 1698-9: S. P. D. E. B., xcix. 635.

[152] Letter to Colonel Gilby, 22 March 1700-1: *ibid.*, cii.

[153] Letter of 16 May 1701: *ibid.*

St. James's.[154] A few days later he told the earl of Romney that the queen expected a report at the cabinet the following Sunday.[155] In 1704 an order in council being laid before the queen at the cabinet, she directed the necessary orders to be given for carrying it out.[156] Shortly after Nottingham informed the prince's council that a memorial of his royal highness had been presented to the queen at the cabinet the day before.[157] " Her Ma$^{ty}$ was pleas'd last Night to declare in Cabinet Council, that her Fleete this Year shou'd bee of the same force as that which was fitted out the last ", wrote the secretary of the admiralty board in 1706.[158] On one occasion Anne bade the lord treasurer not to come to Windsor unless a cabinet council had to be held; if the roads were passable she would be at St. James's the following Tuesday or Wednesday.[159] In 1716 Secretary Methuen wrote to Stanhope, abroad with George I: " there was a Council called yesterday Morning, when his Royal Highness's Patent was read, after which he sat almost three Hours with the Cabinet Council." [160] The presence in cabinet of the prince, acting as regent for his father, is several times noted.[161] In 1717 one of the under-secretaries wrote: " I forgot to ask My Lord whether a Cabinet Council should be summoned for Thursday next & whether for the Morning or Evening in regard to His Ma$^{ty's}$ drinking the Waters." [162]

At meetings of the principal advisers of the crown called " cabinet council " generally the sovereign is mentioned as present or there is nothing to imply that he was absent. Occasional notices to the contrary, however, occur. In 1694 there was a meeting of six of the principal ministers of which one set of minutes is endorsed " Committee of Council ", but the other, in Shrewsbury's hand, is endorsed by him: " Cabinet Council at Whitehall ".[163] William was away from England at this time, and there is no indication that Mary was present. If she was at this meeting, then contrary to the regular custom, her name was omitted from the list of those present prefixed to the minutes. In the diary of Earl Cowper, lord keeper, in 1705 is the entry: " Cabinet. Q: present ", which might indicate that she did not invariably come.[164] On other occasions Lord Cowper does not say the queen was present, or specifically indicate that she was. Of the meeting of ministers in 1711 at which Harley was stabbed by Guiscard, which is described by many contemporaries as a " cabinet council " or a " committee of the council ", at which the members present are known, there is no account which mentions the presence of Anne, and, indeed, from a later account it is clear that she was not present.[165] In 1712 the Duc d'Aumont, describing the " conseil du cabinet " declared that the queen was always present.[166] Elsewhere, however, he says that the cabinet meets in the presence of the queen only once a week, leaving it uncertain whether his assertion is intended to signify that the cabinet met once a week only with the queen present, or that it met once a week in her presence.[167] In 1714 the earl of Mar writing to another nobleman, says: " Blist be

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[154] Letter of 23 March 1701-2: *ibid.*

[155] Letter of 26 March 1702: *ibid.*, ccvi-ccvii. 20.

[156] Nottingham to Blathwayt, 14 February 1703-4: *ibid.*, civ.

[157] Letter of 21 March 1703-4: *ibid.*, ccix. 148.

[158] Burchett to Secretary Hedges, 21 October 1706: S. P. D., Naval, vii.

[159] Letter of May 1701: *ibid.*

[160] Letter of 13 July 1716: S. P. D. E. B., cclxvii.

[161] *Ibid.*, 14, 25, 30 August 4, 11 October, 15 November 1716, 11 January 1716-17.

[162] Delafaye to Tilson, 13 August 1717: S. P. D., George I, ix.

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[163] S. P. D., Naval, iii, 21 June 1694; *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 85.

[164] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 26 November 1705.

[165] *Portland MSS., H. M. C.,* 15th report, appendix, iv. 670.

[166] " La Reyne y est toujours présente ": Salomon, *Geschichte des Letzten Ministeriums Königin Annas,* p. 352.

[167] *Ibid.,* p. 356, note.

God, the Queen recovers extreamlie well. Her gout is now easie to her and going off. She had a Cabinet Councill on Sunday night and was present her self at it." [168]

After all, however, the question involves nothing more than nomenclature. Meetings of the principal ministers of the crown are sometimes called "committees", sometimes "cabinets". At meetings called "committee of foreign affairs", "the committee", and later "committee of council" or "lords of the committee" the sovereign is very frequently, though not by any means always present. Before 1717 at meetings called "cabinet" or "cabinet council" almost always the sovereign is mentioned if any statement of those attending is made, though there are instances where he was certainly not present, and more where he may have been absent.

For this earlier period it is impossible to obtain much exact information about attendance at meetings of the "cabinet", since few minutes of meetings denoted "cabinet council" appear, and only occasionally some correspondent mentions those who assembled. In another place consideration has been given to attendance at meetings denominated "committee of foreign affairs" or "committee of council", of which many minutes for these years have come down, and from which it is possible to draw certain conclusions. What was said of attendance there applies, of course, to meetings of the cabinet. Generally speaking, six or eight or ten seem to have been present, sometimes even eleven or twelve.

In 1691 Lord Sydney wrote to William: "the cabinet counsell I believe the queen tells Your Majesty is very thin".[169] Two years later there is mention of "a great cabinet council", which probably means one with full attendance.[170] In 1706 Harley wrote to Newcastle that the duke of Somerset and Sir Charles Hedges were both in the country, " so we have a very slender cabinet ".[171] In 1717 one of the under-secretaries wrote to another that a cabinet was to be summoned to meet at Hampton Court; the business was important; it " requires a sufficient number to be there "; let the lords in town be called upon and urged to come. Delafaye endorses the paper: [172]

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[168] Letter to the earl of Findlater and Seafield, Whitehall, 19 January 1713-14: *Seafield MSS., H.M.C.*, 14th report, appendix, iii. 226.

[169] Letter of 3 February 1690-1: *Dalrymple*, ii, part iii. 224.

> Lord Chancelor uncertain
> Lord Steward D of Kent will be there & endeavr to bring Ld Chancelor
> My Ld Stanhope will be there Mr Secry Addison ill at Holland House uncertain if he can go.

Evidently the attendance of certain members at a meeting was desired, and perhaps the attending of a certain number was thought necessary. On the other hand, evidently it was not considered compulsory to come.

Of procedure and course of business in cabinet councils not much can be added to what has been said in respect of committees of foreign affairs and of meetings of the lords of the committee. A cabinet was a meeting of the principal servants and ministers of the king. Often the king was present: then they sat solely to advise and assist him. When he was not at cabinet or committee still they were supposed to be his servants working solely under his authority and in his behalf, reporting whatever they proposed, and awaiting his sanction for whatever they proposed to have done. In 1716, when the power of the king was visibly in decline, and shortly before the king ceased attending cabinet councils, Secretary Townshend wrote to Stanhope, the other secretary of state, at a time when George I desired some extraordinary method for furnishing immediately a sum of money: "I own freely to you, were I in Mr. Walpole's case, I should expect his majesty's commands, for laying that matter at least before the Cabinet Council; it being in my opinion too great a weight for Mr. Walpole to take upon himself".[173] During all this time in meetings of the cabinet or committee the documents give no indication of the existence of a first minister superior to the others, and acting as a presiding officer when the sovereign was absent. If there is mention of a first minister or a "premier minister" it is not with respect to cabinet proceedings but solely in respect of the favor of the crown. In 1712 the Duc d'Aumont affirmed that the archbishop was the principal member, but added that he was an elderly man in poor health, and of little consideration at court, so that he had not been summoned to attend meetings for some time.[174]

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[170] Luttrell, iii. 180.

[171] Letter of 10 September 1706: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.,* 13th report, ii. 196.

[172] S. P. D., George I, ix, 8 August 1717. Also *ibid.,* 9 August 1717.

In the nature of things some ministers, of superior experience and ability, or more greatly in the royal favor, must have taken larger part in cabinet business when the monarch was present, and even more so when he was away. When the privy council was reconstituted in 1679 and the committee of intelligence established it might have seemed that the lord presidency, revived for the earl of Shaftesbury, would have brought leadership in council and in committee. Actually, however, Shaftesbury soon found that his position was little more than nominal, and after a while there is small indication that the lord president had precedence over the others in "the committee of council". In 1691 the writer of a newsletter, who may or may not be a sufficient authority, said that Shrewsbury was for the present out of favor with the queen, while the secretary—Romney—to whom he had abandoned his place, was taking the principal part in cabinet business, especially during the absence of the lord president.[175] Next year there is notice that the lord president had communicated a letter along with a copy of depositions to the cabinet council, but it might as well have been done by any of the other cabinet members, and was much more apt by this time to be done by one of the secretaries of state.[176]

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[173] Letter of 16/27 October 1716: Coxe, *Walpole,* ii. 117.

[174] "L'Archevêque de Canterbury en est le 1$^{er}$ membre, cependant comme celuy d'aujourd'huy est valétudinaire, et de peu de considération à la Cour il y a longtemps qu'il n'y a esté appelé." Salomon, *Geschichte des Letzten Ministeriums Königin Annas,* p. 352.

The general course of development in England, the increasing power and after 1688 the avowed predominance of parliament in the governmental system, with the ever larger and more direct dependence of the executive and administrative parts of the government upon parliament for financial support, were destined to give primacy among the king's servants to the principal treasury official, and in the development of the premiership in the eighteenth century usually it was the first lord of the treasury who held that position.

Meanwhile, also, the secretaries of state had been constantly increasing in power and importance. At the beginning of the seventeenth century they had been in effect the scribes and clerks of the king. But through their hands had been passing from king to council and to cabinet or foreign committee the intelligence domestic and foreign. They constantly brought commands or information to the cabinet and constantly took directions upon what was resolved. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the secretaries of state were certainly the most active members in the cabinet council, and in many respects they had come to be the most important. It is from the letter books of the secretaries and from their correspondence that the student learns much that is now to be discovered about cabinet proceedings. To the secretaries, most probably, are owing the registers of minutes of the committee of foreign affairs and of the committee of intelligence that have come down. From time to time, at least, the "committee" or the cabinet was assisted by one of the clerks of the privy council, but it was one or other of the secretaries, apparently, who made it a practice to take minutes of cabinet proceedings, and, while minutes seem sometimes to have been taken by other members, it is to secretaries like Shrewsbury and Trenchard that the mass of minutes—containing so much exact information—in respect of meetings of cabinet or "committee of council" of the period of William is owing. In 1697, immediately after Vernon learned that he was to be a secretary of state, he wrote: "To-morrow I shall be sworn a clerk of the cabinet councill".[177] The secretaries constantly announced the results of cabinet deliberations, and communicated the orders and directions resolved on.[178] D'Aumont declared that each of the secretaries of state proposed for his department the business considered in the cabinet, and then drew up the minutes and resolutions that were taken.[179] On one occasion St. John wrote to a correspondent that all his letters were being kept with great privacy. " But those subjects which relate to yourself, or any other particular persons, and those which are of a nature not to be communicated, even to the cabinet, till her Majesty shall think fit, should properly compose a separate letter; and there is this good reason for it, that a secretary of state is under no obligation of leaving these in his office; whereas those letters which contain the general thread of business, which are read in Cabinet, and have orders given publicly upon them, cease to be in his power, must be left to his successor, and ought to be laid up in the paper-office ".[180]

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[175] "On remarqua aussi avec reflexion que my Lord Shrewsbery qui etoit present a perdu un pareil honneur de parler d' affaires d'etat avec La Reyne, et qu'il se tient à la porte du conseil du cabinet avec toute sorte de gens pendant que celuy à qui il a bien voulu quiter sa place est non seulement dedans mais qu'il fait la pluspart des affaires sur tout pendant l'absence de my lord President comme à present." Newsletter of London, 30 June/10 July 1691: *Denbigh MSS., H.M.C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 200.

[176] S. P. D. E. B., xcviii, 29 April 1692.

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[177] Vernon to Shrewsbury, 2 December 1697: *Vernon Letters,* i. 434.

[178] Secretaries' letter books, *passim;* for example, S. P. D. E. B., cii, civ.

[179] "Chacun des secretaries d'Estat dans son département propose les affaires qui s'agitent dans le conseil du Cabinet, et dressent ensuite les minutes des résolutions qui s'y prennent." Salomon, p. 355.

Letters, communications, petitions were constantly brought to the cabinet council. In 1688 Pepys wrote that numerous letters had been received, some of which had been opened and read that evening " at the Cabinet ".[181] In 1691 Nottingham informed the lords justices of Ireland, that he had received their recent letter, and read it " to the King at the Cabinet Councill "; the king's orders would be sent to them.[182] In 1693 a memorial to the members of the cabinet from the victuallers of the navy, who had been ordered to bring an account of the provisioning of the fleet, is addressed " to the Right Honorable the Lords of their Ma$^{\text{ties}}$ Cabinett Councill ".[183] Somewhat later the lords commissioners of the admiralty sent Secretary Trenchard proposals about paying the crews of the ships to be laid up for the winter, also a copy of a letter received from the admirals of the fleet: " both w$^{\text{ch}}$, We desire you to lay before Her Ma$^{\text{ty}}$ & the Lords of the Cabinett Councill ".[184] In 1698 Secretary Vernon wrote that a petition had been presented to the king that evening at the cabinet council.[185] On another occasion Secretary Nottingham wrote to the recorder enclosing a petition, asking if the case was truly stated, that he might lay the petition before the queen at the cabinet that morning.[186] In 1710 a certain one wrote to Harley's son: "I hear that the petition of the Warden of All Souls, about which I presumed to trouble your father, has been delivered to the Queen and brought before the Cabinet Council".[187]

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[180] St. John to Lord Raby, 8 May 1711: Bolingbroke, *Letters*, i. 196.

[181] Letter to Lord Dartmouth, 9 November 1688: *Dartmouth MSS.*, *H. M. C.*, 11th report, appendix, v. 189.

[182] S. P., Ireland, E. B., i, 27 October 1691.

[183] S. P. D., Naval, ii, 18 April 1693.

[184] *Ibid.*, 25 August 1693.

Outsiders, particularly officials not members of the cabinet, were frequently called before it to give information or answer questions. Pepys was present at cabinet councils on many occasions. In 1666 he records that two goldsmiths being summoned were "before the King and his Cabinet about money; they declaring they would advance no more".[188] In 1691 the writer of a newsletter related that Schomberg ("duc de Lenster") had been allowed to come to the cabinet council when business that affected his office of general was pending; that he had been present that morning; since he was not of the cabinet he remained standing; but that the queen, to give him pleasure and honor, had caused all the councillors to stand while he remained.[189] In 1700 one of the secretaries wrote: "If the Treasury had thought of it time enough to have given notice, the King would have met them with the Cabinet Council this afternoon, to consider what they had to offer upon the proposals that have been made them concerning farming the Excise; it must be done, therefore, on Sunday".[190] Sometimes outsiders sought to appear before the cabinet. In 1711 a correspondent wrote that a month before he had sought permission to appear before the cabinet to give information: "I hope I shall please the Queen & her Councill . . . by proveing & makeing such Discoveries as shall be for the good of her majestie & Governm$^{t}$".[191]

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[185] Letter to Mr. Heron, 4 July 1698: S. P. D. E. B., xcix. 530.

[186] Letter of 22 December 1702: S. P. D. E. B., civ. 182.

[187] Dr. William Stratford to Edward Harley, Oxford, 12 October 1710: *H. M. C., Portland MSS.*, vii. 21.

[188] *Diary*, 19 October 1666.

[189] Newsletter of 19/29 June 1691: *Denbigh MSS., H.M.C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 199.

[190] Vernon to Shrewsbury, 30 May 1700: *Vernon Letters*, iii. 67, 68.

At times there was probably much debate and discussion in the meetings, with difference of opinion, though of this only incidental information is obtained. In 1671 there were disputes in the cabinet with respect to the oppression of Holland and the aggrandizement of France.[192] Next year differences between the two chief ministers—Arlington and Buckingham—about making peace with Holland or continuing to act with France, caused frequent cabinet councils to be held.[193] In 1683 the earl of Rochester and the marquis of Halifax had divers bickerings and contests "in the cabinet and publique councils".[194] Lord Dartmouth relates that Charles Montague "who was the worst bred gentleman I ever saw", reflected in a very rude manner upon the earl of Sunderland before the king "at the cabinet", who was highly incensed at his behavior, and ordered him to wait on Sunderland the next day and ask his pardon. With a very saucy air Montague told Sunderland that the king had commanded him to ask pardon. "The other replied, 'I know very well the king commanded you to ask my pardon, but he did not command me to give it you, and therefore I do not do it.' "[195] In 1711 Swift relates that the cabinet council was not held the night before, because St. John would not sit with the duke of Somerset: " So to-day the Duke was forced to go to the race while the Cabinet was held ".[196] Next year Bolingbroke wrote about a cabinet meeting, " I am now to tell you, that when this point was debated last night before the Queen, I found all the Lords concurred with me . . . I moved, and with a great deal of difficulty prevailed, to have a private instruction sent to Lord Lexington ".[197]

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[191] S. P. D., Anne, xiv, 10 January 1710-11.

[192] Despatch of Alberti, 13 November 1671 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xlii. 157. There was much about Holland at this time in the committee of foreign affairs: S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvi.

[193] Despatch of Alberti, 25 November 1672 (N. S.): Venetian Transcripts, xliii. 417. There were meetings of the committee of foreign affairs 27 October, 3, 4, 8, 10, 17, 24 November, 1 December 1672 (O. S.), according to the register of the committee: S. P. F. E. B. M., clxxvii.

[194] *Autobiography of Sir John Bramston* (Camden Society, xxxii), p. 171.

As proceedings of the privy council were supposedly kept secret, unless permission to reveal them was understood to be granted, so it was with affairs of the committee of council or cabinet, and more particularly so. Since the cabinet was composed of a smaller number of ministers, and since they were generally the more experienced and responsible members of the privy council, secrecy of cabinet proceedings was, it seems, better maintained. None the less, what was done in the cabinet was often known or easily surmised by outsiders. And it will be shown hereafter, that as the foreign committee or cabinet had been evolved from the larger body of the privy council for better secrecy partly, so in course of time, as the cabinet becoming larger guarded its secrets less well, did an interior group of cabinet ministers keep important matters to themselves.

When in 1683 Charles II determined to abandon Tangier, he communicated this to the " cabinet council ", enjoining silence.[198] In 1688 Pepys wrote to Lord Dartmouth with respect to a meeting of the cabinet, " My Lord, I doe not think my self at liberty to mention anything said in that place on this occasion by any of my Lords ".[199] In 1692, according to Luttrell libels purporting to contain two of the king's speeches to his cabinet were thrown about the streets; whereupon the authors were searched for, and great rewards offered to discover them.[200] In 1700 a communication to Harley about a cabinet council is written in cipher.[201] Two years later Vernon, secretary of state, wrote to Stepney, the English minister in Vienna: "I can only say that your remarks are just; but I believe the method must be continued of communicating the foreign letters to a committee of the Council. Perhaps the number may be soon contracted, and then I hope the secret will be better kept ".[202] In 1704 Nottingham, after declaring that a particular matter could have been revealed only by a member of the cabinet, wrote that it "is coāy to his duty, as was also the discovering of what past at the Cab$^{t}$ Council . . . & th$^{t}$ therefore whoever has publisht these or any other matters past in th$^{t}$ Council is unworthy of the Trust & any fav$^{r}$ from her Ma$^{ty}$ ".[203]

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[195] Note to Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* iv. 216.

[196] *Journal to Stella, Prose Works,* ii. 222.

[197] Letter to Matthew Prior, Windsor Castle, 29 September 1712: Bolingbroke, *Letters,* iii. 116, 117.

[198] Burnet (ed. Airy), ii. 437.

From time to time permission was sought or given to reveal what has been said and done in the cabinet. In 1697 Vernon related in the house of lords various particulars concerning the work of Shrewsbury in connection with the Fenwick plot. What he said "was afterwards confirmed by my Lord Wharton, saying he had the King's leave for it. Besides the Archbishop, Lord Godolphin, and Lord Privy Seal, told the House what they remembered the King said to the same purpose at the cabinet council, when he laid before them the discovery of the plot".[204] In 1708 the earl of Mar wrote to Anne that the only way he and certain others had of vindicating themselves from the charge of having caused Scots prisoners to be brought to London was to deny it: "there was no other way of doing it than by teling and publishing what past in the Cabinet Councill; and we not haveing your Majesties allowance for doing that durst not adventure on it, nor in dutie cou'd we, for that wou'd have been interpred revealing your Majesties secrets".[205]

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[199] Letter of 29 October 1688: *Dartmouth MSS., H.M.C.*, 11th report, appendix, v. 179.

[200] Luttrell, ii. 606, 608.

[201] Henry Guy to Robert Harley, 14 December 1700: *Portland MSS., H.M.C.*, 14th report, ii. 638.

[202] Letter of 28 April 1702: *Vernon Letters*, iii. 218.

[203] Add. MS. 29587, fo. 133.

There is much evidence that what went on in the cabinet was often known outside. In 1673 when Sir Joseph Williamson was abroad as ambassador, all sorts of cabinet news—not only about membership, changes in membership, time of meetings, persons summoned before the lords, but about all business—was sent to him, apparently without any difficulty, again and again, by his clerk and other correspondents.[206] In 1705 Lord Cutts writing from Dublin to his sister, said that she would do him a signal service if she would send him all sure news of state intrigues, party designs, "or whatever comes under the head of secret or cabinet news"; but she was to tell him nothing that she was not certain of, anything doubtful to be mentioned as such.[207] In 1708 it would appear that cabinet business was told by the duke of Somerset to a friend of Erasmus Lewis, by him to Lewis, and then by Lewis to Harley.[208] Three years later a correspondent of Horatio Walpole's writing from Venice, said: "the French here tell me the secrets of our cabinet".[209]

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[204] Vernon to Shrewsbury, 12 January 1696-7: *Vernon Letters,* i. 169.

[205] Letter from Edinburgh, 3 July 1708: *H.M.C., Mar MSS.,* p. 456.

[206] S. P. D., Charles II, cccxxxvi, part i.

[207] Letter of 18 October 1705: *H.M.C., Frankland-Russell-Astley MSS.,* p. 187.

[208] *Portland MSS., H.M.C.,* 15th report, appendix, iv. 508.

[209] Alexander Cunningham to Horatio Walpole, 20 March 1710-11: *H.M.C.,* 11th report, appendix, iv. 84.

Occasionally one catches a glimpse of cabinet councillors at work and of their surroundings, though mostly all this has long since passed entirely into oblivion. In 1687 the Spanish ambassador had several conferences with some of the principal ministers, undoubtedly members of the cabinet, though perhaps he did not confer with them in cabinet councils. They were the lord chancellor, the lord treasurer, the lord president, and the two secretaries of state. The meetings were in the office of the first secretary of state, where Charles II had held his cabinet councils. The ambassador says that there was no table in their midst—as there would have been in the privy council chamber. He was given the best place, that in front of the door.[210] In 1705 Earl Cowper gives a different picture of a meeting at which he was present: "At Evening, at the Cab:, Ld Tr wrote me a Note across the Table, desiring me to use my Interest with my Friends in the Commons House, to stop the Bill against Officers; & p̄ticularly to deal with Mr King to that End", which he says he undertook.[211] On one occasion Vernon wrote to the duke of Shrewsbury: "The Dutch letters arrived on Sunday, in time enough to send them to my Lord Portland, while the Cabinet was sitting".[212]

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the authority and importance of the cabinet were more and more clearly understood and maintained. In 1695 the duke of Norfolk wrote to one of the secretaries of state that he would like to return to the king's service; "and when I reflect that the reason the King gave me [for leaving him out of the commission of the regency] was that he had left all in the hands of his Cabinet Council,

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[210] Ronquillo to the king of Spain, 10 November 1687: Add. MS. 34502, fo. 127.

[211] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 4 November 1705.

[212] Letter of 15 December 1696: *Vernon Letters,* i. 123.

I wish he would allow me the honour to be of that number, which not only would be a great encouragement to me in the ambition I have to serve him, but would put me in a post to do it with that credit and honour to myself that I should not despair of being an useful as well as a diligent servant".[213] In 1703, when a certain one had expressed disapproval of a proposal, Godolphin wrote to Nottingham: "y$^{r}$ lord$^{p}$ knows that a resolution taken in the cabinett councill ought not to be altered but in the same place".[214] In 1708 a correspondent wrote that parliament was to be opened by commission, "which is to consist of all the Peers of the Cabinet Council", the speech to be spoken by the lord chancellor.[215] In 1711, during a debate in the house of lords on the war in Spain, a speaker declared that it was certainly a fault in the British ministry to approve something done by the council of war in Spain, "for a secretary of state gives no direction but from the cabinet council".[216]

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[213] Letter to Sir William Trumbull, 8 November 1695: *H.M.C., Downshire MSS.,* I. ii. 582.

[214] Letter from Windsor, 19 August 1703: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 96.

[215] H. Boyle to the duke of Marlborough, 9 November 1708: *Marlborough MSS., H.M.C.,* 8th report, appendix, p. 35.

[216] *Parliamentary History,* vi. 979.

# CHAPTER XVI

## WORK OF THE "CABINET COUNCILL", 1660-1717

ATTEMPT has been made to show from numerous contemporary allusions that generally "cabinet", and often "juncto" or "cabal" were the equivalents of "committee of foreign affairs", and of "the committee", "committee of council", and "lords of the committee", when those expressions were used in respect of a small group of principal ministers who were engaged in the more important tasks of governmental work. In so far as that contention is valid the work done in cabinet councils has already been described in accounts of what was done in committees of foreign affairs and by the lords of the committee. It might, then, seem superfluous to recount the activities of the cabinet further, since whatever can be said must be largely duplication of what has been said. The primary problem pertaining to this subject, however, during all of the earlier period is establishing identity or difference in respect of bodies designated by various terms. In previous chapters the work of the group of principal councillors of the king has been described only in respect of what was done in gatherings designated "committee of foreign affairs" by those who recounted them, or else "the committee", "committee of council", or "the lords of the committee". Here it is proposed to give account of the work done in what contemporaries described as "cabinet" or "cabinet council". It will be shown that the work done in cabinet was the same as that done in foreign committee or by the lords of the committee of council.

A French report concerning England, written probably about 1687 or the beginning of 1688 said that in the cabinet council, which ordinarily met each Sunday in presence of the king, despatches were read, and there was deliberation about orders to be sent out upon them.[1] In various letter books of the secretaries the cabinet appears as a council less for deliberation than transaction of business, though this results largely, no doubt, from the character of the contents of the letter books, mostly concerned with decisions and orders which the secretaries were to communicate to the officials or others concerned.[2] Spanheim, in his account of the English court written in 1704, says that in the cabinet council secret affairs, whether foreign or domestic, were dealt with; there officers of the crown or of the royal household were appointed or dismissed; there were chosen the ministers to be sent abroad, and the instructions sent to them were prepared; there were considered the reports and the letters from the ministers to the secretaries of state. In general also, the cabinet dealt with treaties and alliances, and with the memorials or remonstrances made by foreign ministers. Finally, in the time before and during the sitting of parliament the cabinet council dealt with matters to be proposed to parliament, and with business to be supported or turned aside by the court.[3] Writing in

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[1] Transcripts from Paris, xlviii. 139. Apparently it was written by Bonrepaux.

[2] For example, S. P. D. E. B., xcviii-ci.

[3] "C'est dans ce Conseil, qu'on traite les affaires secretes, soit du dedans ou dehors du Royaume; quil se fait la déclaration des charges ou changemens des Officiers de la Couronne, ou de la Maison de la Reine; du choix des Ministres au dehors, de leurs Instructions, et des rapports qu'ils peuvent avoir fait par leurs lettres aux deux Secretaires d'Estat, suivant leurs deux differens départemens: Et ainsi en general des Traittés; des Alliances; des Memoires ou remonstrances faites de la part des Ministres étrangers en cette Cour; enfin, avant et durant le temps de la convocation d'un Parlement, à digerér les cas et les affaires, qu'on y doit proposer, appuiér ou detourner de la part de la Cour." *English Historical Review,* ii. 767.

1712 the Duke d'Aumont declared that the matters of greatest secrecy were dealt with in the cabinet.[4] In 1682, when Monmouth was attempting to reconcile himself with the king, "the whole matter was brought before the Cabinet Council at Hampton Court".[5]

At a meeting of the "Cabinet Council" at the earl of Sunderland's office in October 1687, present besides the king, the lord chancellor, the lord president—this office was held by Sunderland who was also secretary of state, Lord Middleton—the other secretary, Lord Dartmouth—master of the horse, and Lord Godolphin—commissioner of the treasury, were called in the duke of Beaufort and four others. To them were given instructions that the lord lieutenant of the counties of Gloucester, Hereford, Monmouth, North Wales, South Wales, and the city of Bristol, should call before him all the deputy lieutenants and justices of the peace within his lieutenancy, either jointly or separately, as he might think best, and ask them one by one the following questions:

> 1. If in case he shall be chosen Knight of the Shire, or Burgess of a Town, when the King shall think fit to call a Parliament, whether he will be for taking off the Penal Laws and the Tests?
> 2. Whether he will assist and contribute to the election of such members as shall be for taking off the Penal Laws and Tests?
> 3. Whether he will support the King's Declaration for Liberty of Conscience, by living friendly with those of all perswasions, as subjects of the same Prince, and good Christians ought to do?

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[4] "Mais c'est dans le conseil du cabinet que se traitent les affaires les plus secrètes": Salomon, *Geschichte des Letzten Ministeriums Königin Annas*, p. 352.

[5] Francis Gwyn to the earl of Arran, 30 May 1682: *H. M. C., Ormonde MSS.*, new series, vi. 376.

The answers given to these questions were to be written down carefully in the case of each one, whether he consented, refused, or was doubtful. Likewise the king desired as exact an account as possible of all the several corporations within the lieutenancy, what chance the compliant might have of sending members to parliament, or if assisted by their friends. Lastly the king would know what Catholics and what dissenters were fit to be added to the list of deputy lieutenants or to the commission of the peace throughout the lieutenancy in question.[6]

In his diary Earl Cowper, lord keeper, gives account of a cabinet meeting which he attended in October 1705:[7]

> Waited on Q. . . . the 2$^{d}$ time at 6 at Night. Cab$^{t}$ Counc: where Letters read from Whitworth, who was with Muscov: Army, (which not really 20,000 Men, tho' reported so numerous.) Instructions order'd for S$^{r}$ Dav$^{d}$ Mitchell to agree with the Dutch for the next Year's Service at Sea. He was order'd to propose, as last Year, to put out 60 Ships on our part, & to demand 36 from them, their Quota being 3 to 5: but beleived Dutch would not send more than last Year, being but 18; pretending to preserve the North Channell for the other 18, which they never did. And if that Excuse should be taken from 'em, I found 'twas beleived the Dutch were not able to fit out their whole Quota, and would find some Excuse or other. 1000 Fire Arms consigned to Gibralter.—A Writt order'd to Corp$^{n}$ of York City, commanding & impowering to choose Sherriffs, tho' time appointed by Chapter elapsed, as was done before in 1702 on like Occasion: to which I spoke the first time in Council.

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[6] Memorandum of the duke of Beaufort, 26 October 1687: *Beaufort MSS., H. M. C.,* 12th report, ix. 91.

[7] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 21 October 1705.

Of another cabinet meeting held on Sunday a few weeks later he wrote:[8]

> When the Q. came, she sent down to the Sec$^{ty}$ to read two Letters; one from the K. of Spain,—the other from L$^{d}$ Peterborow . . . The Queen was advised to communicate these Letters in a Speech to Parl$^{t}$ on Tuesday next.

Generally speaking the work dealt with in meetings of the "cabinet council" concerned foreign relations and all sorts of domestic matters. In cabinet was handled much business that had to do with the fleet, the army, the treasury, the church, local affairs, petitions, and examination of criminals, conspirators, suspects, or witnesses. There was also consideration of business relating to Scotland, Ireland, the outlying dominions, and to trade. Much that had once been managed in privy council, or in the committee of foreign affairs or cabinet, came more and more to be dealt with in respective departments, while finance, which had once been so great a concern to the councillors of the king was after 1688 largely managed as well as controlled by parliament and the treasury officials.

Principal of the tasks of the cabinet was dealing with foreign relations, as had always been the case with committees of foreign affairs. In 1671 the Venetian ambassador reported discussion in a "Cabinet Council": it was said that Spain would yield nothing to France, hoping, in event of war, by the aid of her neighbors to recover what she had previously lost.[9] Four years later he wrote that the English cabinet, foreseeing the dilatoriness of the negotiations, had delayed in respect of matters that pertained to the ambassadors destined for Nymwegen.[10]

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[8] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 25 November 1705.

[9] Despatch of Alberti, 16 January 1671 (N.S.): Venetian Transcripts, xlii. 22, 23.

[10] Despatch of 5 April 1675 (N. S.): *ibid.,* xlv. 52.

In 1683 the Dutch ambassador reported that matters affecting the states general had been made better understood in the king's cabinet council.[11] Next year the French ambassador wrote that on the day before, the king of England had thought fit to speak in his cabinet council of that which the ambassador had told him about the siege of Luxemburg.[12] Shortly after he said that James had brought before his secret council for deliberation what answer he should give to the memorial of the Spanish ambassador—of which, says Barillon, a copy had been sent by him to the king of France. After much consideration it was resolved that Sunderland should tell Ronquillo that the king, his master, did not think it fitting to undertake the arbitration suggested.[13] A little later a correspondent reported that Dutch business was about to come up in " the Cabinett Councell ".[14]

In 1686 James II brought before his cabinet council the declaration ordered by Louis XIV at Ratsbon.[15] Next year Barillon sent word that James highly approved the answer of Louis to the emperor: at the cabinet he had spoken of it, bearing witness how much the French king had done for Europe's repose.[16] In June 1688 the papal nuncio sent word that Sunderland had read him an extract from a letter of the king of France bidding Sunderland tell James that the prince of Orange was assembling naval forces, and offering to assist the English fleet with French warships, but that James after discussing the matter in his cabinet had resolved to thank Louis without committing himself.[17] In October it was believed that the king in his cabinet council was about to resolve to send Godolphin in all haste to Holland, to try to accommodate differences arisen between the Prince of Orange and himself.[18]

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[11] Van Citters to the states general, Windsor, 24 August 1683 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 FF, fo. 531.

[12] Barillon to the king of France, Windsor, 1 May 1684 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clviii. 213.

[13] Letter to the king of France, London, 23 November 1684 (N. S.): *ibid.*, clix. 364.

[14] John Drummond to the duke of Queensberry, London, 27 December 1684: *H.M.C., Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig,* ii. 201.

[15] Barillon to the king of France, 28 March 1686 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxv. 287.

[16] Letter to the king of France, 17 March 1687 (N. S.): *ibid.*, clxviii. 154.

In 1694 William, then abroad, bade the cabinet consider demands of the Swedish court for compensation in respect of the detention of some ships in England.[19] Three years later at a " Cabinett Councill " held on Sunday were considered a memorial relating to the treaty of peace between England and France and a memorial from the French ambassador.[20] In 1701, when William received a letter from the king of Spain, giving notice of his accession to the crown, " the king ordered the letter to be read in the cabinet council; there was some short debate concerning it, but it was never brought into any further deliberation there ".[21]

In 1702, " an Account having been given, this Evening in the Cabinet Councill, of the Proposition made by Count Wratislau, her Maj$^{ty}$ has directed the Lords of the Cabinet Councill to meet and to Consider of an Answer to be returned to him: in Order whereunto their Lord$^{ps}$ haue agreed to meet to morrow at six in the Evening at this Office, and desire Your Lordp will be with them ".[22] Later that year the separate article additional to a treaty with the House of Lunenburg being read at the cabinet, the queen directed her pleasure to be signified to Marlborough to sign it, and that the article should be ratified along with the treaty.[23] In 1703 Secretary Hedges wrote to the lord treasurer that since the foreign letters had not yet come in, he would trouble him no further than to recount what had been done that day: " The E. of Nottingham's letter to Mr Methuen, and mine to Mr Stepney relating to the Treaty with Portugall were read and approved at the Cabinett ".[24] Later Hedges informed Nottingham, the other secretary, that the queen had directed some matters mentioned by Nottingham and also several passages in the foreign letters of Hedges to be considered " at a Cabinet " the next evening.[25] Some months after, Godolphin wrote to the duke of Somerset that in regard to a matter the queen " does suspend coming to a final resolution upon it till after the sitting of the Cabinet council to-morrow night, before which time she hopes she shall have received the King of Spain's letter which I hope and believe will very much guide her Majesty's resolution in that matter ".[26]

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[17] " Sua Mtâ avendo consultato l'affare nel suo Consiglio di Gabinetto " . . . Letter to the papal secretary of state, London, 18 June 1688 (N. S.): Add. MS. 15397, fo. 120.

[18] Despatch of the Dutch ambassador, 21 September/1 October 1688: Mackintosh Collection, Add. MS. 34512, fo. 101.

[19] Blathwayt to Shrewsbury, Tirlemont, 14/24 June 1694: *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* ii, part i. 83.

[20] Secretary Vernon to Ambassador Williamson, 28 December 1697: S. P. D., William and Mary, xv. 195, 196.

[21] Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* iv. 482.

In 1705 Anne's direction was to be taken " at the Cabinet Council " that the English representative at Frankfort should employ his good offices together with the Dutch Minister to induce the princes of Rotenburg to accept an equivalent from the landgrave of Hesse for the bailliage of Rheinfels.[27] "At Night a Cabinet", Earl Cowper wrote in his diary that year, "Foreign L.rs read", of which he gives the substance.[28] "A Cabinet. Portugal L.rs", he writes at another time; and a few days later: "Little done at Cabinet. No Foreign Letters".[29] Again he writes of a cabinet:[30]

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[22] Secretary Vernon to the lord high admiral, 15 April 1702: S. P. D. E. B., ccvi-ccvii. 30.

[23] Hedges to the duke of Marlborough, 18 December 1702: *ibid.*, ci.

[24] Hedges to the lord treasurer, 30 March 1703: *ibid.*

[25] Letter from Bath, 4 September 1703: Add. MS. 29589, fo. 135.

[26] Letter of 29 January 1703-4: *Somerset MSS.*, *H. M. C.*, 15th report, vii. 116.

> The Letter from Copenhagen; that K. of Denm.k was push'd on by his Brother the Prince to insist on this of Lubeck, from the Narrowness of the Prince's Estate. [This the Secretary read low, P. G. of Denm.k being at Table.]

In 1709, the lord chancellor says, in respect of the Gertruydenberg negotiation, "which was laid in all it's Steps before the whole Cab.t", that the lord treasurer, lord president, and the others seemed confident of a peace; but nothing save seeing such great men believe it, could incline him to think France reduced to accept the conditions.[31] According to Lord Hardwicke, there was a minute of a cabinet council among Somer's papers, in which rupture of the negotiations was the subject of debate.[32]

The members of the cabinet took part in making the Treaty of Utrecht. With respect to the preliminaries of this treaty, St. John wrote to the queen in September 1711:[33]

> The Lords of the Committee of Council met this morning att the Cockpit, and directed the Earl of

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[27] Adam Cardonnel to Robert Harley, Whitehall, 12 January 1704-5: *Portland MSS., H.M.C.,* 15th report, iv. 157.

[28] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 11 November 1705.

[29] *Ibid.,* 13, 18 November 1705.

[30] *Ibid.,* 2 December 1705.

[31] *Ibid.,* p. 41.

[32] Note in Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* vi. 7.

[33] Letter to Queen Anne, 20 September 1711: S. P. D., Anne, xvi.

Dartmouth and myself to confer with Monsieur Mesnager.

We saw him accordingly this evening att M^r^ Prior's house, where my Lord Treasurer and my Lord Chamberlain were likewise present.

He has put into our hands the answer sign'd by the King of France to the demands last sent over by your Majesty's order, and this answer complys with every article, except the eighth relating to North America. We find however that we shall be able to compound this point with him in the manner which your majesty some time ago resolv'd to pass it in, provided France gave you Satisfaction upon the seventh article, as she has now entirely done.

The propositions which are to be sent into Holland as the foundation of a general treaty, we have likewise receiv'd from him, and that which was thought the most liable to objection has been very much mended. My Lord Treasurer having however propos'd some farther alterations, in order to make the whole more palatable abroad, and Monsieur Mesnager seeming inclin'd to agree to them, I am this night to draw them into form for my Lords of the Council to consider tomorrow morning.

This Madam being the present Scituation of the treaty, your Servants were unanimously of opinion that the warrant & full powers should be prepar'd this night, and transmitted to your Majesty; by which means, if it be your pleasure, the latter may pass the great seal to morrow.

. . .

My Lord Treasurer mov'd, and all my Lords were of the same opinion, that M$^{r}$ Prior should be added to those who are empowered to sign, the reason for which is because he having personally treated with Monsieur

> de Torcy, is the best witness we can produce of the sense in which the general preliminary engagements are enter'd into. besides which, as he is the best vers'd in matters of trade of all your Majesty's servants who have been trusted in this secret, if you shall think fit to employ him in the future Treaty of Commerce, it will be of consequence that he has been a party concern'd in concluding that convention which must be the rule of this Treaty. The rest of the Plenipotentiarys are all those who have the honour to sit in y^r^ Majesty's Cabinet Council, which my Lords understood to be your Majesty's pleasure.

At times the cabinet dealt with business that concerned Scotland, Ireland, and the plantations and outlying possessions of the crown. In 1678 when Scottish nobles came to London to complain of oppression by Lauderdale, the chief of them were heard " before the cabinet council ".[34] In 1684 two letters relating to Scots business were read " in the Cabinet Councill ", and the matter fully debated. Then the king decided what should be done.[35] In 1703 Godolphin wrote to Nottingham from Bath, where the queen was staying, that it was necessary for her majesty speedily to send to Scotland her resolution about the affairs of that kingdom. Since the matter was too important to be determined without the opinion " of the L^ds^ of the Cab: Councill ", the queen desired Nottingham to inform the lords in London of the business, and send her their opinion, upon which she would call together the lords who were with her for guidance to such decision as she should think proper. Godolphin asked that the letters he was sending be returned, since they should also be considered "by the L$^{ds}$ of the Cab: Councill that are here".[36]

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[34] Burnet (ed. Airy), ii. 148.

[35] The earl of Moray to the duke of Queensberry, Whitehall, 9 August 1684: *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig,* ii. 30, 31.

In 1687 one wrote: "Fame, whose character you are very well acquainted with, says, our Cabinet councils, especially on Sunday last, were taken up with the affairs of Ireland".[37] In 1692 Nottingham sent the drafts of five Irish bills to the attorney general, desiring him to consider them, and to be at his office the next evening, bringing the bills, "when the Lords of the Cabinet Councill, and some Irish Lords will be here to consider of them".[38] At a meeting of the king and seven at Kensington in 1696, of which the minutes are in Shrewsbury's hand but which he does not designate as of either "cabinet" or "committee", it was arranged that the pretensions of the master of the ordnance in Ireland and of another should be examined "at the Cabinet Council".[39]

From time to time plantation business was brought before the cabinet, though it should be remembered that the category of business which principally remained to the privy council and the committee of the whole privy council was what had to do with the plantations and outlying possessions. In 1684 the French ambassador wrote that Charles II had given a new government to New England, the old charter being taken away by the court of king's bench: this had been under deliberation in the king's secret council.[40] In the note book which he kept Halifax recorded that "upon occasion of Gov$^t$ to be settled in New England; I arguing for the liberty of the people, hee [Lord Jeffreys] replyed whosoever capitulateth, rebelleth. This at the Cabinet Councell ".[41] In 1697 Secretary Vernon wrote that memorials about St. Christopher and the selling of negroes in Virginia would be considered " at the Cabinet Councell " the next Sunday.[42] In the following year the Hudson Bay Company desired a man-of-war to convoy their ships. The king bade them present their reasons to " the Lords of the Cabinet Councill " and the lords commissioners of trade.[43] On another occasion William took advice of his cabinet upon the declaration of insurrectionists in Maryland and means of quieting the people in arms.[44]

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[36] Letter of 23 August 1703: Add. MS. 29589, fos. 107, 108.

[37] Letter of J. F. to John Ellis, London, 17 May 1687: *Ellis Correspondence,* i. 298.

[38] Letter of 20 July 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii.

[39] *H. M. C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House,* II. i. 323.

[40] Barillon to the king of France, 7 December 1684 (N. S.): Transcripts from Paris, clix. 378.

In this connection also the cabinet dealt with matters affecting commerce and trade. According to the Venetian ambassador, in 1674 the duke of York " in the Cabinet " urged that the Guinea Company be reëstablished.[45] In 1693 a correspondent declared that " Cabinett, Admiralty, and Exchange " were all deeply concerned for the safety of the Turkey Fleet, since some hundreds of merchantmen were exposed to the whole naval power of France.[46] In 1696 Shrewsbury wrote of a previous " Cabinet Council " at which the king had directed matters concerning the consuls to be considered by the lords justices during his absence, for future report to himself.[47] In 1698 a petition against the Royal African Company was presented to the king at the cabinet council.[48] In 1713 the commissioners of trade were summoned "to the Lords of the Cabinet-Council then sitting, & were directed by their Lordships to consult with some Merchants further" upon the treaty of commerce to be made with Spain. That afternoon the board of trade consulted accordingly, "& Agreed upon several Heads to be represented to the Lords of the Cabinet" the next day. A meeting of cabinet ministers, members of the board of trade, and merchants at Lord Bolingbroke's office was ordered for the following Friday. At that meeting were present the lord high treasurer, the lord president, the duke of Ormonde, and two secretaries of state.[49] A little later the "Cabinet-Council" was to assist the board of trade in negotiations with the French commissaries for trade.[50]

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[41] " Devonshire House Note Book " : Foxcroft, *Life of Halifax*, i. 428.

[42] Vernon to Lord Ambassador Williamson, 17 December 1697: S. P. D., William and Mary, xv. 177.

[43] Secretary Vernon to Mr. Popple, 19 May 1698: S. P. D. E. B., xcix. 511.

[44] Referred to *ibid.*, cx, 10 March 1710-11.

[45] Despatch of Alberti, 23 Novemebr 1674 (N.S.): Venetian Transcripts, xlv. 120.

[46] Charles Bertie to the earl of Rutland, 1 July 1693: *Rutland MSS., H.M.C.*, 12th report, v. 140.

[47] Shrewsbury to Blathwayt, 3 July 1696: *H.M.C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House*, II, i. 363.

With respect to parliament there was much business before the cabinet council. In 1704 Spanheim in his account noticed the activity of the cabinet before and during sessions, concerning what was to be proposed to parliament, what to be supported in the interests of the court, what to be put aside if possible.[51] In so far as the sovereign himself did not decide, and more and more was this so as time went on, it was in the cabinet that the summoning, the proroguing, the dissolving of parliament was resolved, and increasingly in course of time were the speeches from the throne drawn up by the cabinet members.

According to a newsletter of 1681, at "A Cabinett Councell held at windsor" the business of calling a parliament was under consideration as also the question whether the duke of York should be recalled. The writer, who may have been well-informed or merely a retailer of hearsay, continues: "it was beleived th$^{t}$ it would haue been motioned Att the Generall Counsell th$^{t}$ was Helde Att Hampton Court on Thursday where the Kinge was present but there was Not one worde of th$^{t}$".[52] In 1686 the French ambassador wrote that the decision to prorogue parliament would not long remain a secret: the king had just spoken about it in the cabinet council, though only as a matter of form.[53] Two years later Pepys, who—as secretary of the navy and virtually in charge of naval administration during a period when the king himself was lord high admiral and lord general of the navy—attended many meetings of the cabinet at this time, wrote to Lord Dartmouth: "I am just now come from attending the King at his Cabinet, where he has been graciously pleased to declare his royall purpose of calling a Parliament".[54] Concerning this another contemporary relates it was told him that at "a Cabinett" a few days before, the lord chancellor and Father Petre both of them spoke long and earnestly to dissuade the king from calling a parliament so soon: "But I will haue a Parliament", said James, rising when they had finished.[55] In 1693 Luttrell mentions a cabinet council at which the sitting of parliament was considered: the king was not expected from abroad for a few days;

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[48] Secretary Vernon to Mr. Heron, 4 July 1698: S. P. D. E. B., xcix. 530.

[49] C. O. 391, xxiv. 29, 30 September, 2 October 1713.

[50] *Ibid.*, 17 December 1713.

[51] *English Historical Review*, ii. 767.

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[52] Newsletter written to John Squier of Newcastle, from London, 4 June 1681: Public Record Office, Admiralty, Greenwich Hospital, Newsletters, i. 99.

[53] "La Résolution de proroger le Parlement ne sera pas longtemps secrète: le Roy d'Angl$^{re}$ en parla hier au Conseil du Cabinet comme d'une Chose convenable à sone service, et ne demanda les avis que pour la forme. Personne n'osa le contredire, on l'auroit fait inutilement." Barillon to the king of France, Windsor, 7 October 1686 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clxvii. 61.

[54] Letter to Lord Dartmouth, 28 November 1688: *Dartmouth MSS., H. M. C.*, 11th report, v. 216.

[55] *Autobiography of Sir John Bramston* (Camden Society, xxxii), p. 312.

if he arrived later it was believed parliament would be further prorogued a few days.[56]

In 1702 the proclamation for proroguing parliament was ordered in the privy council, not without some dispute, but secretary Hedges explained that delay would be convenient, that several members had desired prorogation, "and that the Cabinet Council above had approved thereof".[57] In 1708 the lord chancellor wrote: "Last night it was resolved by the Queen at the Cabinet to have a council this day and there order a proclamation to declare the Parliament shall be prorogued till the 16th November, and then sit to do business".[58] Three years later Earl Poulet told Harley that it had been mentioned "in the Cabinet" to inform parliament of the emperor's death, since it was regarded as certain that then Harley might with no difficulty get what vote he pleased in foreign affairs.[59] Some months later Anne wrote to Harley, become earl of Oxford: [60]

> As to the Parliament I cannot tell yet when I shall be able to open it, for tho' I thank God I am much better then I was, I am not out of paine and the weaknes always continues a good while after. However I believe it will be necessary to come to some resolution at the next Cabinet Council, which I have appointed on Teusday and I think it would be best to have the Parliament prorogued to that day four weeks, and by that time I hope both you and I may be in a condition to go to the House.

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[56] Luttrell, iii. 210.

[57] Edward Southwell to the earl of Nottingham, 9 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 189.

[58] Lord Cowper to the duke of Newcastle, 4 October 1708: *Portland MSS., H.M.C.,* 13th report, ii. 205.

[59] Earl Poulet to Robert Harley, 18 April 1711: *Portland MSS., H.M.C.,* 15th report, iv. 674.

[60] Letter of 3 November 1711: *H.M.C., Bath MSS.,* i. 215.

In 1678, according to a contemporary, three speeches were drawn up for the king, one by the lord treasurer, one by the chief justice, and one by Sir William Temple, " w$^{\text{ch}}$ last wase approved of at the cabinet and wase the speech the King spoke ".[61] In 1701 the earl of Sunderland, in his advice to Lord Somers, said that it would be well for the king to give order " to two of the cabinet " to prepare the speech, such as the duke of Devonshire and Secretary Vernon, and bid them consult in private with Somers, rather than bring to the cabinet a speech already made up.[62] About 1702 the marquis of Normanby, lord privy seal, who some years before had insisted as a member of the cabinet on being called to all meetings of cabinet ministers, wrote to the earl of Nottingham, secretary of state:[63]

> Your Lo$^{\text{p}}$ having given your self the trouble of assuring me that it was only by accident I was not at first acquainted with the rough draught of her Ma$^{\text{tyes}}$ speech; I take the liberty of desiring now to see it that I may have at least this little time of reflection before the Cabinett Councell to night, as others have had much longer. I cannot be at S$^{\text{t}}$ Jame's this morning, & to trouble you at home would be unreasonable, so that if you please to send it me inclosed it shall be returned you immediately.

In 1705 Godolphin wrote to Harley that it was not usual to send a message to either house of parliament which had not been " first considered at Cabinet Councill ".[64] In October of that year Earl Cowper records in his diary, concerning a cabinet meeting: " At s$^{\text{d}}$ Counc: the Q.

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[61] Charles Hatton to Viscount Hatton, 18 June 1678: *Hatton Correspondence,* i (Camden Society, new series, xxii), p. 164.

[62] Hardwicke, *Miscellaneous State Papers,* ii. 459.

[63] Undated letter, apparently of 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fo. 361.

[64] Letter of 11 January 1704-5: *H.M.C., Bath MSS.,* i. 65.

desired her Speech might be prepared, which the Sec$^{ty}$ was order'd to do, & report it on Friday Morn: next at Cabinet". And a few days after: "Queen's Speech at Cabinet". A month later he writes again: "Cabinet. Q: present. Queen's Speech for next Day; in which letters were communicated; only it was resolved not to communicate the first paragr: of L$^{d}$ Peterborough's Letter".[65]

In the earlier part of the eighteenth century the privy council and the principal councillors who manned the important committees and made up the committee of foreign affairs had been constantly busied with finance and getting revenue for the crown. By the end of the century there was little of this, and the cabinet was much less occupied with taxation and finance than with foreign relations, management of parliament, and many other things. In 1666 Pepys speaks of two London goldsmiths "before the King and his Cabinet", who declared they would advance no more money, there having been talk of the king issuing privy seals commanding them to trust him, which gave them reason to decline.[66] In 1691 one of the secretaries of state wrote to the other: "The Lords of the Cabinet Councill, and those of the Treasury, were this morning in the City to borrow money for the Setting out the Fleet."[67]

In the cabinet there was much that had to do with admiralty and naval affairs. In 1664 Pepys, clerk of the acts of the navy, went to Whitehall, where the king was in his "Cabinet Council". Pepys was called in, and Charles asked him many questions.[68] It was thought, perhaps mistakenly, that in 1672 Shaftesbury proposed intercepting the Dutch East India Fleet; the duke of York was against it. "These reasons of the Duke and the Sea Officers were overruled by the King and his Cabinet Councill." [69] Next year the king, the duke, "and most of the Lords of the Cabinet Councell" went down to the fleet one night for their final resolutions about what should be done.[70] In 1683 a certain one was called into the cabinet council to give account of a naval matter.[71] In 1688, when the prince of Orange was on the way to England, the victuallers of the fleet were summoned to a cabinet council, where they gave James account of the navy: they were urged to hasten preparations.[72] Shortly after Pepys made a list of the ships of the king and another list of the ships of the prince of Orange; his conclusions he presented to the king "at the cabinet".[73] About this time Pepys attended several cabinets to give information about the king's ships, and to receive orders and directions for transmission to the earl of Dartmouth, commander of the fleet.[74] Towards the end of the month he wrote to Dartmouth: "I am by his speciall direction given me this evening at the Cabinet to observe to you that . . . he does not look for any opportunity of enterprizeing anything new with the fleet this winter." [75]

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[65] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 21, 26 October, 26 November 1705.

[66] *Diary,* 19 October 1666.

[67] Viscount Sydney to the earl of Nottingham, 24 February 1690-1: S. P., Ireland, ccclii. 41.

[68] *Diary,* 9 November 1664.

In 1691 Secretary Sydney wrote that "the Lords of the Cabinett Councell" had the day before concluded it was absolutely necessary to have a squadron of ships in the Downs by the second of March.[76] Later that year the writer of a newsletter reported that Admiral Russell had arrived somewhat unwell. Hence he was not present at the cabinet council in the evening, which had lasted four hours, and to which the admiralty commissioners had come.[77] Next year the marquis of Carmarthen told William that " the greatest part of the Cabinett Councill " was zealously and unanimously of opinion that there was now an opportunity to destroy much of the French naval force.[78] Shortly after Luttrell noted that the day before the cabinet had sat both forenoon and afternoon, supposedly about the descent on the French coast.[79] A few days later another wrote: " This morning the Lords of the Cabinet early went for Portsmouth." All had intended to go, but some did not. The admirals of the fleet, not deciding what to do, had put back to the Isle of Wight, believing it useless to attempt anything against the enemy. " These resolves being sent up to London, is the occasion of the Lords' journey . . . The Cabinet before they went discoursed with divers experienced persons in sea affairs, and that knows the coast, and as I understand, goes with a persuasion that the descent is possible in any of the places." [80] At the same time Harley declared that " several of the Cabinet Council " had just gone to the fleet which had come to Spithead, to adjust a dispute or to know why the commanders had not proceeded in the expedition which had been planned.[81] Next year Luttrell reported a cabinet at Whitehall, attended by the lords of the admiralty, who received instructions about the fleet, expected to sail within a few days.[82] About the same time he noted: " as the letters came away, the lords of the cabinet councill, &c. were entring the town [Portsmouth] to hold a councill of war with the admiralls to give the last orders about the sailing of the fleet ".[83] A few days later he said the lords of the admiralty had just consulted with the cabinet council about hastening forces from Scotland and from Ireland for an expedition.[84] In October, " a cabinett councill was summoned this day ": three admirals were ordered to be present to give account of the summer's expedition, but they were not called in because Sir George Rooke did not arrive.[85]

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[69] Clarke, *Life of James the Second,* i. 478.

[70] Robert Yard to Williamson, 7 July 1673: *Letters Addressed from London to Sir Joseph Williamson* (Camden Society, new series, viii), p. 91.

[71] William Trumbull to Lord Dartmouth, 11 November 1683: *Dartmouth MSS., H.M.C.,* 15th report, i. 126, 127.

[72] Samuel Pepys to Lord Dartmouth, 7 October 1688: *Dartmouth MSS., H.M.C.,* 11th report, v. 147.

[73] Pepys to Dartmouth, 10 November 1688: *ibid.,* p. 191.

[74] *Ibid.,* pp. 193, 196.

[75] Letter of 29 November 1688: *ibid.,* p. 218.

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[76] Letter to the earl of Nottingham, 10 February 1690-1: S. P., Ireland, ccclii. 23.

[77] Newsletter, London, 15/25 September 1691: *Denbigh MSS., H. M. C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 202.

[78] Letter of 14 June 1692: S. P. D., King William's Chest, xii. 99.

[79] Luttrell, ii. 521.

[80] Ralph Grainge to Sir G. Treby, 2 August 1692: *Fitzherbert MSS., H. M. C.*, 13th report, appendix, vi. 32, 33.

[81] Robert Harley to Sir Edward Harley, 2 August 1692: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.*, 14th report, appendix, ii. 495, 496.

In June 1702 in " the Cabinet-Councill " Nottingham read a letter from Admiral Rooke, and naval arrangements were considered.[86] In September Secretary Hedges wrote " to the Lords of Cabinett Councill " from Bath that the queen had been informed M. Chateaurenault—Vice admiral of France—was returning with the Spanish plate fleet: she had therefore thought it fitting for notice to be sent immediately to Rooke; about means of doing this their lordships were to advise with the lord admiral's council.[87] In 1704 it was resolved in the cabinet that Sir Cloudesley Shovell should proceed when he had twenty ships—order therefor to go out through the admiralty.[88] One Sunday in 1705 Earl Cowper noted: "At Night a Cabinet. The Admiralty call'd in: inquired

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[82] Luttrell, iii. 95.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[86] S. P. D. E. B., civ, 2 June 1702.

[87] Letter of 11 September 1702: Add. MS. 29588, fos. 200, 201.

[88] Secretary Hedges to Mr. Clarke, 1 May 1704: S. P. D. E. B., cv.

Condition of Ships."[89] On another occasion he speaks of a cabinet meeting, with some difference of opinion and some argument, at which it was resolved that a squadron be ordered to sail to Catalonia from Lisbon.[90]

Before the cabinet came often military business and matters relating to ordnance and supply. About 1686, according to an anonymous account the "Cabinet Council" heard a proposal to supply arms and ammunition for Ireland: a debate followed, with testimony for and against.[91] In 1690 it was the opinion of "My L$^{ds}$ of the Cabinett Councill" that it would be well for five regiments expected from Holland to encamp in Hyde Park or some place nearby.[92] Two years later was read in "the Cabinett Councill" a letter concerning the necessity of paying the gunsmiths of London, otherwise the troops in Flanders could not be properly equipped: Secretary Nottingham sent an extract from this letter to the lords commissioners of the treasury thereupon.[93] In June 1694, on news of the failure at Brest, the queen called a cabinet council. Several meetings were held: it was supposed orders and despatches were sent to Portsmouth, bidding the forces go to Flanders.[94]

In 1702 a memorial asking for powder and stores for the Isle of Man was brought by Nottingham to the attention of "the Lords of the Cabinett Councill": they referred to the earl of Romney—master general of the ordnance—for report.[95] Shortly after, the commissioners for sick and wounded and for the exchange of prisoners were required to appear before the cabinet and report concerning English prisoners in France.[96] Next year a complaint against a Captain Henley was brought before the cabinet council. The record had later endorsement: "Ld Marlboro sd tht he would reprimand Capt Henley." [97] In 1705 letters about the war in Spain were read at a cabinet meeting.[98] Two years later Godolphin wrote: "In case my Lord Peterborough comes to you in my Lord Sunderland's absence, the Queen would have him told it is expected he should attend her Majesty and the Cabinet council, with the reasons which induced him to quit the army in Spain and go to the Duke of Savoy, without order or leave upon that occasion." [99] In 1708 by direction of Marlborough it was proposed "at the Cabinet" to raise sixteen new regiments, besides the four already ordered; as soon as possible, all the existing regiments in Britain or in Ireland to be sent to Ostend.[100] In 1710 Marlborough wrote: "I dare not speak against the project of sending troops to the West Indies, the Cabinet Council thinking it very reasonable." He was opposed to it, none the less.[101] Next year, during a debate in the house of lords, allusion was made to "the design of an offensive War in Spain", which had been approved and directed by "the Cabinet Council", notwithstanding the opinion of General Stanhope.[102] In 1713 was mentioned a scheme laid before the queen and the cabinet for establishing a garrison in Shetland, and repairing the fort

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[89] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 2 December 1705.

[90] *Ibid.,* 10 February 1705-6.

[91] *Granard MSS., H. M. C.,* 2d report, appendix, p. 214.

[92] Carmarthen to the king, 16 June 1690: S. P. D., King William's Chest, vii. 52.

[93] Letter of 9 April 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 414.

[94] Luttrell, iii. 329.

[95] S. P. D. E. B., civ, 3 June 1702.

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[96] S. P. D. E. B., civ, 27 June 1702.

[97] 14 January 1702-3: S. P. D., Naval, cxviii. 11.

[98] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 16 December 1705.

[99] Letter to Harley, 21 August 1707: *H. M. C., Bath MSS.,* i. 178.

[100] Erasmus Lewis to Robert Harley, 15 October 1708: *Portland MSS., H. M. C.,* 15th report, iv. 508.

[101] Letter to Godolphin, 16 May 1710: *Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough . . . and Select Correspondence of Her Husband, John, Duke of Marlborough* (London, 1838), ii. 440.

[102] *Parliamentary History,* vi. 970.

"at Bressa sound, which is one of the best harbours in Europe".[103]

It was afterwards related that Anne, in cabinet, herself proposed the restraining orders to the duke of Ormonde. Bolingbroke declared he had not been apprized of this, and would have objected to it; but when Anne had signified her pleasure to the lords, she made a sign with her fan at her mouth, which Bolingbroke knew she never did except when determined on a measure.[104]

Before the Revolution of 1688, especially, religious and ecclesiastical matters came before the cabinet. In 1684, according to the French ambassador, the question of treatment of imprisoned Catholics was discussed in the secret or cabinet council. Different opinions were expressed during the debate: the lord keeper and Halifax opposed relaxing the laws; Sunderland, Rochester, Secretary Jenkins, and Lord Chief Justice Jeffries favored relaxation.[105] According to the Dutch ambassador, James II at a Sunday meeting of his cabinet said that whereas he had by his declaration given liberty of conscience, he found it well to regulate the lists of deputy lieutenants in some places so that the good work might be carried out.[106] In 1688 the ambassador wrote that the day before in cabinet council there was further deliberation and final decision about the charge against the bishops and the seeking of a jury that would regard the king's expectations.[107]

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[103] The earl of Morton to the earl of Oxford, 11 May 1713: *H.M.C., Portland MSS.,* v. 290.

[104] Hardwicke, *State Papers,* ii. 482.

[105] Barillon to the king of France, London, 16 October 1684 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clix. 340.

[106] Letter of 23 December 1687 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 271.

[107] "Gisteren avont was in het cabinet conseil nader gerevideert en eyndelyck besloten hoedanigen informacie jegens ged: bischoppen in te brengen, en verder het conseil gelast op te soecken soodanige jurys als wie men meynt dat aan Syne Majesteyts verwagtinge souden connen

Three weeks later the papal nuncio wrote that after the acquittal of the seven bishops was held a cabinet council (*Consiglio di Gabinetto*) in which, according to Sunderland, it was resolved to take the case to the court of ecclesiastical commission; in the privy council (*Gran Consiglio, che chiamano privato*) the king was to give his thoughts on what had passed.[108] Somewhat later he reported that in cabinet councils James was constantly declaring he would rather die a martyr than abandon Catholicism, or bow to the opinions and designs of the prince of Orange, not willing to be compelled in his government to receive the law from anyone.[109] It was afterwards related that the letter written by Fagel to a Scot, containing the opinion of the prince of Orange that English Catholics ought to be treated with moderation, but without repeal of the Test Act and other legislation, was carried to the king, and was brought by him into the cabinet council.[110]

From time to time local matters came before the lords of the cabinet council. In 1688 the king's printers lodged complaint against the Oxford university press for printing bibles in small size. The earl of Clarendon consulted the lord chancellor: "His Lordship advised, that a petition should be delivered to-morrow at the cabinet council to the King, in the name of the University, and he would take care of it." [111] In 1690 "the lords of the cabinet

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voldoen, maar het wert bij veelen gelooft al of sy daartoe wel groote moeyte sullen hebben." Van Citters to the states general, Westminster, 22 June 1688 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 HH, fo. 437.

[108] Despatch of Adda, 16 July 1688 (N.S.): Add. MS. 35402, fo. 34. There is nothing about this in P. C. R., lxxii, but what was apparently a close council, the king only given as present, was held 10 July.

[109] Van Citters to the states general, 12 November 1688 (N.S.): *ibid.*, fo. 493.

[110] Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* iii. 204, 205.

[111] Clarendon, *Diary,* 22 September 1688: *Correspondence of Henry Hyde,* ii. 188.

council" recommended that certain ones should be reprieved, then transported.[112] Somewhat later the queen ordered the cabinet to hear a dispute between the great seal and the judges about carrying the list of circuits to the crown.[113] In 1692 the lords of the cabinet examined a justice of the peace on the complaint of a lieutenant accused of pressing an apprentice.[114] Next year two Jacobites were examined and questioned.[115] In 1699 the king "at the Cabinet Councill" received the petition of two condemned: he bade the secretary have the lord chief justice direct a reprieve, and report to him on the matter.[116] In 1702 the lords of the cabinet approved the draft of a letter by the postmaster general.[117] Next year "in the Cabinet Councill" offer of a reward was ordered.[118]

Numerous petitions were dealt with. In 1692 the queen having considered Sir Thomas Southwell's case, and the report upon it by Lord Godolphin "at the Cabinett Councill" was pleased to order him the sum of five hundred pounds.[119] In 1699 the petition of French ministers was brought before the cabinet and by the king referred to the archbishop of Canterbury.[120] Next year a petition being presented to William at "the Cabinet Councill" he ordered the secretary of state to refer it to the lord chief justice.[121] Shortly after, the petition of one of the barons of the exchequer, to be allowed to resign, being presented to the king in cabinet, William gave permission.[122] In 1702 the lord chief justice was asked to report on the petition of a condemned criminal, that it might be laid before the queen the next Tuesday at "the Cabinett Councill".[123] In 1706 William Penn wrote to Harley: "Lest I should not see thee at Windsor, I send the enclosed petition. I know whose province it belongs to, but he has promised to give it in Cabinet, and I only beg he may have it (Sir C. H[edges]) time enough."[124] In an undated memorial addressed to the secretary of state it is represented: "That his Grace the Duke of Somerset has Promised to call for Cap$^{t}$ Hill's Peticon & Certificates in the first Cabinet Council; and the L$^{d}$ President has promis'd to speak to both. Wherefore y$^{r}$ Hon$^{r}$ is most humbly Desir'd to have the said Cap$^{ts}$ Peti͞con & Certificates in readiness to lay before Her Maj$^{tie}$, for the more effectual obtaining of the Royal Mercy."[125]

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[112] Mary to William, 21 June/1 July 1690: Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland,* ii, part iii. 114.

[113] S. P., Ireland, cccliii, 13 February 1690-1.

[114] Nottingham to the lords commissioners of the admiralty, 1 April 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 405.

[115] Luttrell, iii. 183.

[116] Secretary Vernon to Lord Chief Justice Holt, 26 March 1699: S. P. D. E. B., ci. 3.

[117] *Ibid.,* civ, 26 May 1702.

[118] John Tucker to John Ellis, Bath, 20 September 1703: Add. MS. 28891, fo. 55.

[119] Nottingham to the lords commissioners of the treasury, 9 September 1692: S. P. D. E. B., xcviii. 543.

[120] Secretary Vernon to the archbishop of Canterbury, 15 May 1699: *ibid.,* ci. 28.

At the cabinet council were sometimes delivered accusations or informations against persons whose actions were causing concern, while at the cabinet also persons were frequently questioned or examined, and sometimes committed to custody, the cabinet council here continuing what the privy council had so frequently done when it took a more active part.

Pepys mentions one who delivered information against another "to the King and Cabinet".[126] "As to the gentleman whom you gave me in charge", said a correspondent in 1683, "he came safe hither with me on Friday last, and that night I carried him to the secretary's who desired me to bring him before the King in the cabinet council next day, where . . . he was examined".[127] Some years later Halifax wrote of this period with respect to the death of Lord Russell:[128]

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[121] Vernon to Lord Chief Justice Holt, 1 April 1700: *ibid.*, fo. 119.

[122] Vernon to Baron Lechmere, 24 June 1700: *ibid.*, fo. 136.

[123] Nottingham to Lord Chief Justice Holt, 6 December 1702: *ibid.*, civ. 173.

[124] Letter of 8 September 1706: *Portland MSS.*, *H. M. C.*, 15th report, iv. 326.

[125] S. P. D., Anne, xxxvi. 68.

[126] *Diary*, 24 October 1666.

> Hee was sent for to the Councell where he was examined in the Cabinet Councell.
>
> The King. Keeper. Halifax saw the faces of no more.
>
> The K. and the Keeper asked him questions. nobody else.

In 1684 it was said that the earl of Anglesey, after examination by the king in his cabinet council, had been committed to the custody of a serjeant at arms.[129] About the same time the French ambassador reports that it was debated in the cabinet council whether to summon Monmouth to testify against those accused of the recent conspiracy.[130] Later that year testimony sent to Charles and the secret committee of Scotland was brought up "at the Cabinet Councill".[131] Afterwards it was asserted to a committee of the house of lords that about 1685 a certain one "had delivered an Information in Writing, to the Cabinet Council of King *James*, relating to the Invasion of the Duke of *Monmouth*".[132] In September 1688 Mr. Skelton, his majesty's envoy, being come from France, was brought before the cabinet whence he was sent to the Tower.[133] Evelyn noted in his diary shortly before the landing of the Prince of Orange that a man was taken with divers papers and manifestoes and sent to Newgate "after examination at the Cabinet Council".[134]

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[127] T. Deanes to Lord Preston, 29 February 1683: *H.M.C.*, 7th report, appendix, p. 362.

[128] Notes of the proceedings of the "Murder Committee", 18 November 1689, in the hand of Halifax: Devonshire House MSS., quoted in Foxcroft, *Halifax*, ii. 120. Cf. *Lords' Journals*, xiv. 378-380.

[129] "Men heeft ten Hove gisteren en heden veel gesproken al off den Lord Anglesey gewesen Lord Privy Seal, naerdat bij Sijne Majesteijt en Sijn cabinetraet geexamineert was, in de bewaringe van een serjeant van wapenen was gestelt geworden." Van Citters to the states general, 28 January 1684 (N.S.): Add. MS. 17677 GG, fo. 18.

[130] Barillon to the king of France, 31 January 1684 (N.S.): Transcripts from Paris, clvii. 143, 144.

[131] The earl of Moray to the duke of Queensberry, 30 September 1684: *H.M.C., Buccleuch MSS., Drumlanrig*, ii. 34.

In 1691 the earl of Clarendon, who had been arrested after corresponding with James II, "was carried before the cabinet council and examined, and returned to my own house under the same confinement".[135] About the same time one of the secretaries ordered that Father Francis, a monk, taken with treasonable papers, should be brought before the cabinet council.[136] In 1693 the cabinet summoned one of the advocates of the admiralty, and asked him to explain why he had not prosecuted privateers acting under commission from King James.[137] Three years later, in minutes taken by Shrewsbury of a meeting undesignated, is the note: "Chaloner to be examined at the Cabinet Council".[138]

According to Secretary Nottingham, writing in 1704, the suspect McLean "had bin often exa̅ı̅ed by the L$^{ds}$

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[132] *Lords' Journals*, xiv. 401.

[133] Newsletter in Trumbull Papers, *H.M.C., MSS., of the Marquess of Downshire*, i. 300.

[134] Evelyn, *Diary* (ed. Bray), 1 November 1688.

[135] Clarendon, *Diary*, 4 January 1690-1: *Correspondence of Henry Hyde*, ii. 330.

[136] Viscount Sydney to the earl of Nottingham, 3 March 1690-1: S.P., Ireland, cccliii. 49.

[137] *H.M.C., Portland MSS.*, viii. 37.

[138] 29 March 1696: *H.M.C., Buccleuch MSS., Montagu House*, ii, part i. 319.

of the Cab$^t$ Council ".[139] In his diary in 1705 Lord Cowper wrote:[140]

> A Cabinet. The Record$^r$ reported the Convictions. I spoke to save one, the Evidence being doubtful; & the other, for first Offence. One respited till further Order; the other transported. And several other Matters in Relation to Trade.

Three years later a Scots nobleman reported that the "Cabin Councill" had advised Anne to order certain prisoners to be sent up.[141] In 1715 Joseph Addison wrote that overtures had been made for the surrendering of Sir William Windham, who had "this morning given up himself, and has bin under examination before the Cabinet ".[142]

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[139] Add. MS. 29587, fo. 128.

[140] *Diary of Earl Cowper,* 9 December 1705.

[141] Earl of Mar to his brother, Lord Grange, 16 April 1708: *H.M.C., Mar MSS.,* p. 437.

[142] Letter to Archbishop King, 4 October 1715: *H.M.C.,* 2d report, appendix, p. 250.

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